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TO THE MOTHER OF MERCY,

THIS PLEDGE OF OUR LOVE

MOTHER DE LA NATIVITÉ,

Foundress.

MOTHER DE LA NATIVITÉ

AND THE

Origin of the Community

OF THE

SISTERS OF MISÉRICORDE

1848-1898

Beati misericordes quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur.
(MATT. V. 7.)

Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.

MONTREAL
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1898

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MOST REV. PAUL BRUCHÉSI,
Second Archbishop of Montreal.

REG. LAPRÉS & LAVERGNE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

ON January 16th, 1898, feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, the Sisters of Miséricorde gratefully celebrated the Fiftieth Anniversary of their foundation.

Many friends of the Community, both among the clergy and laity, had eagerly assembled to take part in the joy of these Angels of charity, and, united in the same sanctuary, at the foot of the same altar, to offer up to heaven the incense of their gratitude for the past and their fervent supplications for the future of the Community. In the morning, Dom Antoine, Mitred Abbot of the Trappist Fathers of Oka, offered the Holy Sacrifice, and in the evening, His Grace Archbishop Bruchési of

Montreal, before giving solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, delivered an address that drew tears from the eyes of all present.

After a touching reference to the merciful goodness of our Saviour in regard to fallen women,—the woman of Samaria, the woman found in adultery, St. Mary Magdelene,..... His Grace continued :—"This work of goodness and mercy of Jesus is "being carried on throughout the ages and has "been accomplished here for fifty years past..... "If you only knew, my dear brethren, all the good "that is done in this house ; if you only knew all "the sorrows, all the misfortunes, all the anguish "which have found a refuge and relief beneath "this blessed roof during the past fifty years !

"If you only knew with what self-sacrifice, what "discretion, what scrupulous reserve charity is "exercised here ! If you only knew how many "families owe to this house the preservation of their "honor in the eyes of the world ! No, no, the "miracles of grace worked within these walls are "unknown. Not only do unfortunate young girls "find here a refuge from shame and despair but "they also recover the friendship of God and learn "to practise the most beautiful virtues.—Elsewhere, "the good accomplished is seen ; here, it is hidden "and must remain hidden ! Behold the peculiar

" merit of the Sisters of this Community! Behold " the special characteristic of their Institute."

These words inspired and have sustained the idea of this work, and they would, if needed, justify it. Our desire has been to make known and cause to be duly appreciated a Community, which like many others, is a native born child of our own City, and which, in spite of the obscurity wherein from the nature of its labors, it must abide, has never ceased, during half a century, to deserve well of the Church and of society in Canada. If we must refrain from making known to the public, the many "miracles of goodness and grace" which have been worked in the shade and mystery of this solitude, and which will be revealed in all their splendor only beyond the limits of time, the hand of piety may, it seems to us, at least gather up the crumbs that fall from the continual feast given to God by holy souls, and it is well to save the fragments of the living bread of good example, lest they perish without profit. Our task has been an easy and consoling one, we had only to relate events in their order. May we have succeeded in doing so with simplicity, according to our desire. The spectacle of a woman of humble rank without other arms than her faith and her charity, struggling against the difficulties that nature most dreads :—poverty,

contradictions, mocking and sarcastic irony, natural loathing and all kinds of suffering; and on the other hand, God contemplating the seemingly unequal contest, and sending help in season, and finally rewarding and crowning the virtue which hoped in Him alone;—is moving enough by itself to dispel the thought, had it come to our mind, of seeking to embellish it by borrowed ornaments.

We have not been able to defend ourself from lively emotion in proportion as the existence of Mother de la Nativité and her first companions, so complete and so great in its humility, has been unfolded before our eyes and we cannot dissemble that we have felt the desire of sharing our feelings with all the friends and benefactors of "La Miséricorde." To them this book is specially addressed. May they be pleased to receive it as a feeble manifestation of a gratitude that can never be fully expressed.

On reading the biographical sketch consecrated to the memory of this pious foundress, and the painful beginnings of her work, the relation of the sacrifices of the early religious, the slow but progressive development of the Community during the period closed by this Jubilee year, they will, we know, bless God for having inspired them with the desire and the will of making such a noble use of

their wealth, and by associating them in the work of His mercy on earth, given them the sweet assurance of sharing one day in His promise: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Lastly, we are happy to add a new page to the annals of the religious Communities of Canada and of the charitable works of "Ville-Marie." Springing up at the hour marked by Providence to answer the needs that the increasing population of a great city daily multiplies, they have all worked with zeal and prudence and rapidly won and merited the admiration and gratitude of Christian souls.—A city may well be proud, when after having engraved on the frontispiece of her religious history the name of the Venerable Marguerite Bourgeois and the Congregation of Notre Dame, and inscribed in her annals in the course of years, the names of Venerable Mother d'Youville and the Grey nuns, Mother Gamelin and the Sisters of Providence, Mother Marie-Rose and her daughters,—she can add on the last page, with Mother Marie-Anne and the Sisters of St. Ann, the name of Mother de la Nativité and the Sisters of Miséricorde. But God forbid that we should draw vanity from the gifts which He, in His bounty dispenses, or even for an instant forget that to Him alone belongs the glory, and

that to Him alone should arise our hymn of gratitude : " *Non nobis Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da Gloriam !* "

L. J. C.

BOOK I

LIFE of the FOUNDRESS

AND

ORIGIN OF THE WORK

(1845-1864)

CHAPTER Ist

Childhood—Marriage—Happiness.

Cum adhuc junior essem... quæsivi sapientiam... ambulavit pes meus iter rectum. (Eccl. I. 18-20.)
When I was yet young... I sought for wisdom... My foot walked in the right way.

THE summer tourist descending the Majestic St. Lawrence from Montreal to Quebec, may discover through the transparent veil of twilight, a modest church situated near the left bank of the river, and half hidden by a screen of foliage. Its tall spire rises towards Heaven like the incense of the evening prayer, scattered here and there at a short distance from the church are to be seen small country houses overshadowed by sturdy elms and maples and surrounded by small gardens where nature's loveliest flowers bloom beside her most useful productions. Such is the

village of Lavaltrie whose foundation dates from the earliest days of the XVIIIth century. Beyond the village stretch forth fertile meadows and vast fields of oats and barley, hedged at intervals by lines of shrubs and thickets. Towards the north the level soil rises by degrees, until the low hills seem to meet the sky and form the boundary of the horizon. The banks of the river are rather low, but at the same time so broken and diversified as to be of an agreable aspect. A large island rises from the water in front of the village, and with its crown of verdure, its gray patches of shingle and boulders, and above all the antique light-houses that are still to be seen on its heights, it forms a landscape which the weary traveller looks upon with pleasure and interest.

The greater part of the inhabitants of Lavaltrie are farmers, and although not rich, yet they are fairly well-to-do and enjoy the moderate comforts which are the just reward of their labor. The sturdy faith and virtues of their forefathers are their most precious inheritance, and many a time has God found among their children His chosen ones, to abide in His sanctuary and become the instruments of His mercies to man.

Such was indeed Marie Rosalie Cadron, the future foundress of the Sisters of Miséricorde. Her father

Antoine Cadron, or Caderon, lived on the produce of his fields and her mother, Rosalie Roy, was the daughter of an honest farmer living in the same parish. Both were sincere and generous Christians of a type which, God he thanked, has not entirely disappeared from our rural districts. God held the place of honor at their fireside, and His holy law was the rule of their daily actions. We are told that Antoine Cadron was a model of patience and submission to the will of God, whilst his young wife was remarkable for her energy, her moral strength and her great prudence.

God blessed their union by the birth of three children : Marie Rosalie, whose biography we are now attempting to write ; Sophie, who outlived her pious sister several years, and a boy who died while young.

Marie Rosalie was born on the 27th of February, 1794, and her pious parents had her regenerated in the sacrament of Baptism on the same day. The venerable parish priest, M. Lamothe, infused into her young soul that grace of christian life which was one day to bloom forth in such beautiful flowers and produce such excellent fruits of righteousness. Did a supernatural light enlighten the pastor's mind, as to the child's future life, during these holy ceremonies ? 'Tis more than we can say. However

that may be, later on, he told Madame Cadron to carefully watch over Marie Rosalie, declaring that she was destined to accomplish great things in the service of God.

" Facts have justified this presentiment," said the saintly Bishop Bourget; " she was truly a child " of predilection, not only in virtue of the graces " with which she was endowed, but also through " the virtues which she practised from her infancy."

From her earliest youth Marie Rosalie showed forth unequivocal marks of the holy life she was one day to lead. Would it were given us to penetrate under the humble roof that sheltered her youthful days and revive some of those charming family scenes enlivened and sanctified by the joyous innocence of the child, but time which respects nothing, has destroyed this modest dwelling and effaced every trace of its existence. We are thus reduced to general evidence unadorned by any particular object or fact : this evidence, however, is itself of great value. According to her mother's testimony Marie Rosalie had not the faults generally seen in children of her age, but from her earliest childhood was a model of obedience, piety and industry, and such was the harmony of the virtues to be seen in her, that she was looked upon as a "perfect" child.

Above all she was full of charity for the unfort-

unate. The very sight of them moved her soul to pity and she did everything in her power to help them with a motherly tenderness. Often was she to be seen depriving herself of a part of her own clothing, in favor of the indigent. Did she happen to learn that any of them were sick, she immediately hastened to their bedside, to lavish on them tender care and consoling words. It might have been said even then, that the poor were "her most intimate friends." We shall see this spirit of compassion and charity increase with her years.

Endowed with an intelligent mind and sound judgment, Marie Rosalie soon mastered the elements of instruction, such as then taught in country schools, and her parents decided to give her a better education, by placing her under the care of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Convent school life did not agree with her natural activity, and her father was soon obliged to take her from the convent for fear the constraint might seriously injure her health.

On her return home, Marie Rosalie recovered her health and spirits and soon resumed her former way of life in the parish where she was known and loved for her virtues.

She had attained her seventeenth year when her parents thought of marrying her to Jean-Marie

Jetté whom she had known since childhood. The marriage was celebrated the 7th of October, 1811. The young man was an excellent match. Of a generous and good disposition, animated by strong faith and fervor in the practice of christian duties, Jetté was capable of appreciating the virtues of his young wife and worthy of seconding her in her good works. The marriage did not cause a separation in the Cadron family. Marie Rosalie continued living with her parents, who gave up a part of their house to the newly married couple. His health beginning to fail soon after, Mr. Cadron gave up to his daughter and her husband the house and their portion of his estate, conditioned on their undertaking to care for their parents until the end of their life. He died the next year and Madame Jetté grieved long over his loss: her mother remained to her and was still to be her consolation for the next twenty-five years ; she was also to be to her the occasion of many sacrifices and much merit on account of the infirmities with which she was stricken in her old age.

Those who knew Marie Rosalie during her girlhood, could easily surmise what she would be in her new state of life. A loving and devoted wife, a tender and watchful mother and above all a fervent Christian, vigilantly consecrating all the leisure

moments of her laborious life to works of zeal and charity, such was her daily life during the twenty-two years she lived in the marriage state. Eleven children were given her; six only,—two girls and four boys,—grew up. God claimed the five others while yet they wore their baptismal robe of innocence.

Madame Jetté was deeply impressed with the sense of her duty towards her children. Looking upon them as a deposit confided to her watchful care by divine Providence, she brought them up rather for God than for herself, wishing above all things to make them good Christians. To succeed in this difficult task she had only to infuse the sentiments of her own soul into theirs, and this was one of the greatest objects of her sollicitude in life.

Whilst teaching them the elements of religion, she endeavored at the same time to form their hearts to piety, and to imbue their souls with that strong faith that sees and blesses the hand of God in all the events of life.

We shall often have the opportunity of remarking this disposition of filial trust in divine Providence, which was the predominant feature of Madame Jetté's whole life and sustained her amidst the trials she had to undergo. After her death, one of her daughters wrote: "Mother never ceased giving "us an example of resignation, no matter what

" happened ; she always remained calm in time of
" trial, and resigned and submissive in adversity ;
" her only words were : 'Tis God's will,—blessed be
" His Holy name. Nothing seemed to afflict her
" more than to see others wanting confidence in
" God's goodness. How often I have heard her
" upbraid persons who gave way to murmurs
" against the divine Will !"

While she taught her children to receive with the like gratitude both the good and the ills of life, as they came from the hand of God, she was no less solicitous to instill into their youthful hearts great charity and gentleness towards their neighbor. Hence she often recommended to them never to nourish feelings of resentment towards any one. " Even though they may have done you the
" greatest possible wrong," said she, " never take
" revenge ; we must forgive if we wish to be
" forgiven ourselves. Let us endure for the love of
" God, all that others cause us to suffer, those that
" insult us know not what they are doing."

Madame Jetté practised faithfully herself what she thus recommended to her children, and lived always in perfect harmony with her neighbors. She would never suffer or listen to backbiting and those slanderous reports that circulate so freely in the world ; her charity enabled her to explain and

excuse everything, and if it became necessary to remonstrate with those who forgot themselves in her presence, she hesitated not to do it. She always gave the lesson with so much charity and mildness, however, that it was accepted without a murmur.

The charity that she showed towards the unfortunate in her childhood was far from diminishing with time ; on the contrary it became more intense as she advanced in years. Moreover, Mr. Jetté was a precious auxiliary to her. This excellent man loved the poor, and the door of his dwelling was open day and night to them. The village of Lavaltrie being on the highway from Montreal to Quebec, many were the poor families and workmen that passed through it, on their way to the city in quest of work, especially during those early years when railways had not yet facilitated the means of communication between towns and cities. The Jetté homestead was ever wide open to all the poor and infortunate ; not only were they received when they themselves sought hospitality, but it was most generously offered to them before they had expressed a wish. Madame Jetté especially was always on the look-out. Her sister Sophie said : " I have often seen her go to meet indigent families who were seeking a shelter, and offer them hospitality for the night, if it was during the summer season, or for

several days and even weeks during the rigorous Canadian winters. Once especially, a poor Indian family was housed for a whole week. The appearance of the guests thus received was at times suspicious, and Madame Jetté on such occasions made known her fears to her husband, but that courageous Christian invariably made light of her anxiety and silenced his own repugnant feelings. "Fear nothing," he would say, " God will protect us, it is better to watch all night than to refuse hospitality." We may well believe that such words as these did not fail to quiet the apprehensions of the noble hearted woman.

The poor never asked her help in vain. One day she had just taken from the oven a nice cake which was to have been a treat for her own children, when there appeared on the scene a poor beggar, whose emaciated face told of long fasting and suffering, asking for a piece of bread for the love of God. Without a moment's hesitation Madame Jetté gave him the warm cake. Her christian spirit had triumphed over her motherly love. At other times she did not wait for the poor to knock at her door, but went forward to meet them and solace them in their cruel sufferings, and in her visits to the homes of the indigent she never went empty-handed. Now she carried them fresh eggs or vegetables

from her garden, and at another time chicken or fruit, knowing well that the joy produced in the heart by a friendly word is never complete, unless accompanied by those charitable deeds that take away all anxiety for bodily wants from the minds of the poor and needy. She was most solicitous for the sick and especially when their recovery was despaired of. Her sister writes: "I have often "seen her pass hours beside the bed of dying per- "sons, talking to them of the joys of Heaven and "the mercies of God, in order to increase their "confidence and alleviate the sufferings of their "last moments: nor did she fear to speak of God's "vengeance and the everlasting punishment due to "sinners, when she judged it necessary to do so in "order to excite contrition in their hearts and pre- "pare them worthily to receive God's pardon."

When any of the neighboring families were visited by death, Madame Jetté was always the first to render all the services required in such cases: she helped lay out the body for burial and often furnished the material from her own resources. After having thus afforded material aid, she poured into the hearts of the afflicted family the sweet balm of pious consolations so much needed and appreciated in time of bereavement.

One of the spiritual works of mercy dear to

Madame Jetté's heart was to instruct young children preparing for their First Communion. After questioning them carefully in the Catechism she would give them a few short and impressive explanations, striving above all to inspire them with the love of God and virtue. What a charming sight to see her surrounded by a dozen of her young pupils: what emotion in her voice when she strove to inspire them with a horror for vice and especially for sacrilegious confessions and Communions. With what penetrating unction did she not exhort them to place their confidence in the mother of God and to preserve their hearts pure from the stain of sin; and with what accents of gratitude mingled with desire did she not tell them of the joys of Heaven, and remind them of all that God has done and still does daily for our salvation! She taught them also pious hymns and sang with them herself. Thanks to her zeal and patience the children were well prepared for the great day of their First Communion, and the good parish priest was never obliged to refuse admittance to the Sacred Banquet to any of those sent to him by Madame Jetté. Not only did she care for the souls of these little ones; she also provided for their exterior needs by making clothing for those that belonged to poor families.

She was remarkably skilful in needle work. Like

the valiant woman whose portrait is admirably traced in the book of Proverbs, she knew how to make good clothes for those of her family, and her hands alone sufficed to keep them clad with neatness and decency. The interior of her household reflected the peace and order that reigned in her own soul. Simplicity and neatness were visible everywhere. "There was a place for everything and everything in its place," and according to her sister's words "the most captious critic would not have been able to find fault with anything."

One of the most striking features of Madame Jetté's moral character was her unchanging gentleness. Never did the smallest cloud overshadow her fireside; ever tender and obliging towards her husband, mild and patient with her servants, she always managed to banish even the most trivial cause of dispute or bitterness. When she was obliged to correct her children, she did it firmly, but also with mildness and prudence. So rarely was she heard to utter an impatient word, that she seemed to be almost perfectly free from those weaknesses, from which no human soul can be completely exempt. Trials and tribulations did not disturb her admirable serenity of mind, she received them meekly from the hand of our Heavenly Father and joyfully went her way without a shade of ill-humor.

If we pay attention we shall see later on, her tranquillity in tribulations, her meekness in suffering, and her serenity amid humiliations, increase and grow stronger and finally reach the proportions of true heroism.

But there was nothing stiff and repulsive in Madame Jetté's virtues. She was naturally amiable and lent herself easily to the relaxations and amusements required in educating youth. She was fond of fishing, and in her leisure moments she often gave herself up to this innocent pleasure with her oldest children. What impressions must not her noble and delicate soul have experienced at the sight of the mighty St. Lawrence, with its many verdant isles adorned with trees of every possible variety, and its majestic stream hastening onwards ever towards the darkening east, while in the west the setting sun seemed to linger for a moment on the horizon and cast a regretful look backwards, over its course before yielding up to night the rule of the heavens. We are here reduced to conjectures, but is it not natural to think that God, who makes all things work together for the good of those souls as to whom he has special designs, made use of those great spectacles of nature to raise his servant's heart to Him, to manifest to her some inkling of His own infinite beauty, and draw her to Himself, by stronger and closer ties?

There was a little garden close to the house, where Madame Jetté found delight in cultivating with her own hands the prettiest of flowers. In winter she took them inside and continued her delicate care. She saw in them, no doubt, the image of the virtues with which she must strive to adorn her soul; and moreover, another pious motive animated her: at Christmas time she could embellish the Crib of the Divine Child with flowers and verdure and adorn her own domestic chapel, which was spoken of as quite "magnificent" in those times.

This small sanctuary was dear to her. When her domestic occupations, or the stormy weather, kept her away from church, Madame Jetté would kneel in prayer before her modest statue of the Virgin Mother, or commend her loved ones to St. Joseph, the head of the Holy Family. She loved to sing, as we have already said, and she had a sweet voice, but never were those frivolous and profane songs indulged in by wordly persons heard on her lips. She found a particular charm in the old-fashioned hymns she had, no doubt, learned during her childhood,—those in honor of St. Genevieve, St. Alexis and St. Joseph being her favorites. In this way did she follow the advice of St. Paul, "speaking to herself in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in her heart to the Lord."

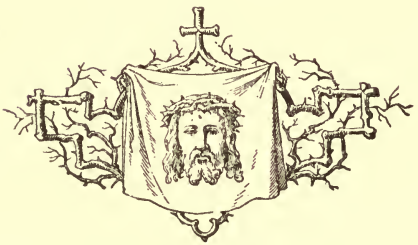
She nourished her piety and charity by frequent visits to Our Dear Lord in the most Blessed Sacrament and by fervent communions. What joy for her soul, when amidst her many occupations Madame Jetté could find a leisure moment to devote to prayer, and with what eagerness did she hasten down the narrow path, lined with trees, winding along the banks of the St. Lawrence to the church. The building no longer exists, but we know it was situated on the bank of the river. The incessant erosion of the water threatened to carry away the sandy ground on which the church was built, so it was demolished in the middle of this century, and a new one erected. Thus, are we deprived of the happiness of seeing the baptismal font where this privileged soul was born to the supernatural life,—and of kneeling at the foot of the altar, where every Sunday, and often on several successive week days, she received her God in the Sacrament of love. Fortunately those who witnessed her piety have recorded their impressions, and thus has the remembrance of it come down to us. From her childhood, Madame Jetté was penetrated with the deepest respect for our holy mother the Church and obeyed her injunctions with religious fidelity. Her sister tells us that she would rather have died than eat meat on a day of abstinence. But obligatory

penances did not suffice to quench her thirst of mortification, and she practised others which might have injured her health, "What is done for God," she said, "never causes death, on the contrary, the more we do for Him the happier we are." Such solid virtue united to precious qualities of mind and heart, the charm attached to a simple and noble character and her eagerness to render service, without exceeding the limits of discretion, had not failed to earn for Madame Jetté, the respect and affection of the whole parish. The pastor of Lavaltrie esteemed her most highly, and Madame de la Naudière, (1) whose large estate formed a considerable part of the parish, took great pleasure in holding frequent intercourse with her. Meantime, thanks to the industry and intelligent care of Madame Jetté, the prosperity of the family became more firmly established as the years went by.

Everything therefore seemed calculated to attach Madame Jetté to her native village and retain her there for the remainder of her life. But the increase of the family, and the anticipation of its coming needs, and above all these motives, the secret designs

(1) The manuscript does not tell us who this Madame de la Naudière was. We are inclined to think that she was Elizabeth de la Corne, born in 1744, and married in 1769, to Charles Louis Tarieu de la Naudière, Seignior of la Pérade; eldest son of Charles Francis, who distinguished himself at Carillon and who died in 1811, a member of the Legislative Council.

of God, who conducts everything to its end with strength and suavity, made her husband determine to buy a larger farm near St. Hyacinthe.



CHAPTER II

Trials and Good Works.

Confidit in ea cor viri sui (PROV. XXXI. 11.)
The heart of her husband trusteth in her.
In die tribulationis meæ Deum exquisivi. (PS. LXXVI. 3.)
In the day of my trouble I sought God.

THE year 1825 is an important date in the life of Madame Jetté, if it be true as we cannot doubt, that God prepares souls which are destined to accomplish a great mission in the world by visiting them with sufferings, and marking them as it were with the seal of the cross.

From this date a new career is opened to the pious woman. Until then, her existence had been filled with happiness and honor in her birthplace, where she lived free from care or trouble; henceforth she is to see but days of adversity and mourning. Nevertheless, God, who is always the same

good Father, afflicts our nature only to secure the triumph of his grace, and we shall see Madame Jetté as calm, as self-possessed, as full of courage and gaiety, in the midst of trials, as she ever was in time of prosperity. Her first step on leaving Lavaltrie was marked by tribulations. By mischance it happened that the house which was to receive the family, near St. Hyacinthe, was not ready at the date fixed for the surrender of the house at Lavaltrie to its new possessor. Madame Jetté and her children were thus several days without a home. In this extremity she sought hospitality from her sister, who lived in the same village ; but she met, strange to say, a harsh refusal, and was obliged to seek a refuge in an abandoned hovel, open on all sides to the wind and the heavy rains of that season of the year. Fortunately another neighbor, moved with pity at seeing the family in such wretched quarters, came forward and removed them all to the shelter of her own home. This was only the prelude of more painful trials. Scarcely two years had passed since the Jetté family had taken possession of their new property, when they found themselves forced to surrender it. The farm was found to be subject to mortgages whose existence they never suspected, and was claimed by the creditors of the dishonest seller. They had, of course, to give it up.

It was surrendering the fruit of long years of work and economy. This loss was a cruel blow for Mr. Jetté. Uneasiness for the future of his family took possession of his mind. What could they do henceforth? Which way should they turn? How could he provide for his children? Troubled by these preoccupations, he lost his appetite and his sleep. Under these painful circumstances, it was his wife who consoled him, and by considerations grounded on faith, brought back to his soul peace and confidence. "It is God's will," said she, "and we must be resigned and submissive. He "will not abandon us; He will take good care "of us, and we can earn our living anywhere." She also persuaded him to pardon the man who had so shamefully deceived them and caused their ruin, and to refrain from prosecuting him, lest his family should be dishonored. The virtuous woman's trust in Providence was verified. At Montreal where they went to live, they met sympathy and protection from Mr. Jetté's family, and through hard work and severe economy they succeeded in providing for all their needs. Madame Jetté was deeply impressed with gratitude towards God, who never abandons his children when they are in need, and endeavored to instil the sentiments of her own heart into the hearts of her household.

"You see that God does not abandon us," she would say to her husband; "let us rejoice in our "poverty. We have good children and they can "earn their living, even while young. They will "be protected from poverty, because they are "trained to work." She would say the same "things to her sons: "My children, the good things "that God gives us, do not belong to us; He takes "them away when He pleases: let us rejoice in all "that happens, and let us thank God both in pros- "perity and adversity.—It is the secret of happi- "ness." These admirable sentiments raised her soul above the trivial events and perishable goods of this world, and rendered her superior though not insensible to the trials of life. For her they were a source of strength in the accomplishment of her duties, and inspired her with fervor in the service of God. But a much heavier cross than all the former ones, now awaited her. Madame Jetté had been living in Montreal but seven years when her husband was suddenly taken from her. The cholera which was so fatal in 1832 carried him off in twenty-four hours. Mr. Jetté, at the hour of death, although quite resigned to God's will, could not help shedding tears on thinking how his dear family would suffer from poverty after his death. He exhorted his children to be faithful in the service of

God, and to take good care of their mother. He confided her specially to his youngest son, Pierre, then seventeen years old, and already eminent in virtue. "I depend on you," said Mr. Jetté, "to be "the family's support; promise me that you will "always assist and never abandon your mother." The weeping youth made the solemn promise to his dying father, and Mr. Jetté closed his eyes in peace.

The afflicted widow, in spite of her deep sorrow, kissed the hand that smote her, but she long remained inconsolable and never could be persuaded to put off mourning. "The world is no longer "anything to me," she exclaimed, the day after the painful separation. We shall hereafter see how she kept her word. The rearing and education of her younger children, works of charity, prayer, and works for the conversion of sinners, became more than ever the occupation of her life.

No sooner have we begun to look beneath the surface of this well-spent life, than we see a fundamental disposition inspiring all her actions, and holding them in marvellous unity. This disposition, —at once the fruit and flower of divine charity,— was an ardent desire, a craving need to spend herself and give herself for God and her neighbor. "Greater love hath no man than to give up his life "for his friends," says the Apostle. Happy the soul

that is filled with that noble passion, and capable of relishing its austere delights! Its life even when wholly spent in obscurity, derives from this complete self-denial a dignity and nobility, which partakes less of earth than of heaven.

Madame Jetté devoted herself to the relief of suffering in others, and to bearing humiliations for herself. She soon found, close at hand, an opportunity for practising those divine virtues. Her aged mother was stricken down with paralysis and became childish. Madame Jetté received her into her own home and, during seven years, gave her the kindest and most attentive care.

For three winters, she sheltered under her roof the sister (and her children), who had so harshly refused her hospitality on the occasion of the removal from Lavaltrie. She acted thus generously, notwithstanding that she knew she was dealing with a person of a captious and peevish disposition, who was indifferent to her manifold acts of kindness, and made her no return but disdain or even abuse.

These cares were not sufficient to satisfy her desire of helping the unfortunate. No sooner was she informed of any neighbors being sick, than she would visit and console them, and render all the assistance in her power. She was always willing to help to lay out the dead. In 1832, and the following

years when those contagious diseases, the cholera and small-pox broke out, Madame Jetté waited on the sick with great charity and assiduity. While taking care of their bodies, she did not lose sight of their immortal souls. Her advice and good example were particularly winning, and became the moving cause of many conversions. We will mention but one example.—It was in 1832, when the cholera made so many victims. She was one of the first to offer her services to help nurse the sick. During her charitable visits, she noticed a young man who for two months had entirely devoted himself to the poor suffering ones, working unceasingly, night and day, in the sick wards; but at the same time, she noticed that he had no sense of religion and that his conduct was disorderly. Madame Jetté could not see all this without trying to remedy it; she resolved to make his acquaintance in the hope of being useful to his soul, and after gaining his confidence enough to permit her to speak openly, she said to him: "You must be very unhappy, living as you do; but you are too good-hearted and charitable for God to abandon you." "What shall I do? " answered the young man. "As to God,—I do " not know Him; I was brought up in the midst of " vice, and have had no example but evil. I have " only heard about the devil and I fear him no more

" than the God you want me to know." "Be " careful, young man," returned the pious widow, " the God you refuse to know will one day bring " you to reason."—" I don't fear Him," said he.— " But would you do something for me ?" she asked. —" Oh ! willingly," replied the young man.— " Well, promise me that you will think of God " now and then, and, every day say one *Ave Maria*, " or this invocation : " My God, have mercy on my " soul." The young man promised all, and quickly learned the *Ave Maria*, which he had never been taught before. Soon after he started for the Rocky Mountains. When he left Montreal he was almost a giant in stature, well-built, and full of life and energy ; " as strong as any four ordinary men," remarks the Sister who reports this story ; " he had " so much confidence in his own strength, that he " thought nothing could subdue him."

Nevertheless, within the space of two years, his disorderly life entirely shattered his robust constitution. He then fell sick. During his sleepless nights, he would often think of Madame Jetté, and finally resolved to see her again. He returned to Montreal and soon knocked at the door of Madame Jetté's modest dwelling. He was nothing better than a living skeleton, and she did not recognize in him the vigorous youth she had attended two years

before. "I am Joseph Labelle," said the visitor, "God has brought me to reason, as you said, though "I had no fear of anything. I have been faithful to "the promise I made you, however. I am very "weak, please find me a place in the hospital." Madame Jetté was much affected at this prodigal child's return. Through her means, he was admitted to the hospital, and no sooner was he admitted than he called for a priest and in a loud voice commenced his confession. The priest told him to speak lower, but his answer was : "No, Father, no "penance is too great for my sins, I am the most "guilty man on earth." Then turning to those that surrounded his bed, he requested them to pray for him that he might obtain pardon. Thus did he open his soul to true repentance, and soon after receiving absolution, died the death of the just.

One of Madame Jetté's favorite works was to try and reconcile with one another the members of divided families. Her presence alone sufficed to banish hatred, her words won over all hearts and her prayers doubtless finished in secret, what her personal influence had already begun. Having learned that the head of a family, whom domestic sorrows had led to abandon his religious duties, was dangerously ill, she visited and consoled the afflicted man so effectually, as to make him at last consent to accept

the good offices of the priest. He died shortly afterwards, but his last agony was something so frightful that not even his wife and children could endure the sight of it. Every one left the room in great terror, excepting Madame Jetté, who remained perfectly self-possessed and assisted the dying person until the last, exhorting him to be resigned to the will of God, and frequently sprinkling his bed with holy water. Her efforts were crowned with success, the terrible conflict ceased and the man's death was calm and peaceful.

Her charity embraced every kind of misfortune. Often was she seen hurrying from house to house in quest of employment for some poor laborer. At other times she strove to find situations for poor orphans, in good families where they would find, not only the necessaries of life, but,—what is still more precious—good christian principles. To succeed in these undertakings she was obliged to make advances, and often to suffer refusals and even reproach or abuse; all of which must have been very painful to a person of so timid and retiring a disposition as Madame Jetté. But she awaited her strength from God and well might she have said, with the great Apostle of Nations : " I can do all things " in Him who strengtheneth me." (PHIL. IV. 13.)

She gathered this energy, which raised her above

the strongest repugnances of nature, and gave her courage to sacrifice herself for others, from her sincere piety which edified all who knew her.

Morning and evening she made long visits to Notre-Dame Church, and often spent hours in succession on her knees before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, towards whom she always entertained a special devotion. One evening she stayed so long that the sexton when about to close the church, after having tried in vain to attract her attention by making a noise, had to approach and speak to her; so absorbed was she in her devotions that she had heard nothing.

After the death of her mother in 1836, Madame Jetté was free to give herself up more entirely to piety. Her children, in view of her delicate health, tried in vain to repress her ardor. "Piety never "kills one," she would reply. Three times did she make, on foot, the pilgrimage to the Calvary on Mount St. Hilaire, erected in 1839, by the Bishop of Nancy, Mgr. Forbin-Janson. These long journeys were necessarily followed by extraordinary fatigue, but what strength does not the love of God give even to the body! "Love feels no burden, when "weary, it is not tired," says the pious author of the Following of Christ. "It performs and effects "many things, where he that loves not faints and is "cast down." (Im. b. III. c. 5.)

CHAPTER III

Madame Jetté bestows attention on fallen girls.

Non enim veni vocare justos, sed peccatores. (MATT. IX. 13.)
I am not come to call the just, but sinners.

NOTHING less than that charity which knows no bounds was needed, to induce her to undertake the work which was henceforth to consume her whole life. There is a certain class of persons for whom society has no word of pity : we mean those young girls who, through ignorance, seduction, or a moment's blindness, have fallen into the abyss where honor and virtue perish. —Frail flowers in their fresh bloom blighted by vice ! Alas ! how numerous are they not in the midst of cities, where, in the struggle for life, human beings are crowded together in a close and exciting atmosphere ! The world displayed all its charms before

their eyes, when it knew them to be innocent; but, once it has corrupted and ruined them, it laughs at their fall, and repulses them with horror; reproaches them with a crime of which it is itself the real author, and naught but dishonor and despair remain to the unfortunate victims. What is to become of them? Where will they go? What asylum, what retreat will throw an impenetrable veil over their sin? How terrible their anguish, how bitter their despair! Blessed forever be the friendly hand stretched out to the young girl during these moments of agony, to save her from utter shame and rehabilitate her soul before God and His Angels.

Such was the mission to which the rest of Madame Jetté's life was to be consecrated. For years had God prepared her for it by the exercise of zeal and charity. While at Lavaltrie she had already as a prelude to this work of mercy, taken into her house a poor illegitimate child that had been, with difficulty, rescued from the criminal fury of its own mother. For several years the child lived under her hospitable roof and motherly care, and when necessity compelled her to part with him, Madame Jetté shed many tears of keen regret.

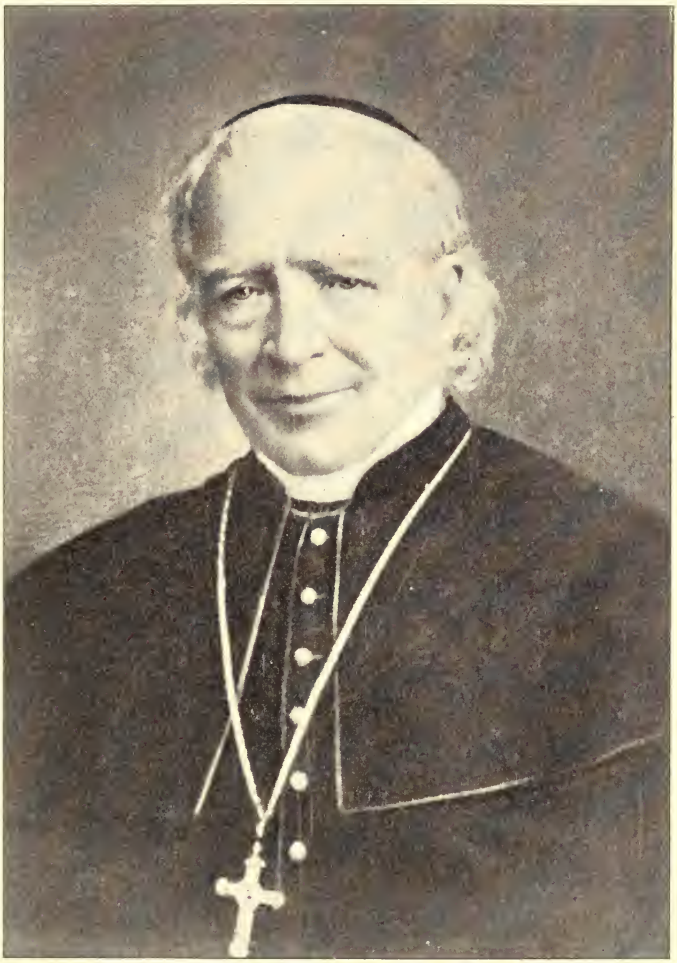
Later on, while the family were living in Montreal, they were one night startled by a loud knocking at the door and a pleading voice crying out:

"Open quickly and save from the murderers." Moved by compassion, Mr. Jetté opened the door and admitted an unfortunate girl who was being pursued by two drunken sailors. He had barely time to hide her in the cellar when the two madmen began to strike the door with an axe and strove to break it in. In vain did Mr. Jetté try to calm them by gentle words. Further resistance becoming dangerous, he opened the door and invited them in to search for their victim. His kindness at length appeased their anger, and they left after having themselves repaired the damage they had done.— Snatched from certain death the poor girl avowed that she had led a life of sin until then, and expressed an ardent desire to do better. Touched by her sad story, Madame Jetté offered her a home in her own house, and did all in her power to bring her back to the practice of duty. God blessed her charity, for the young girl was well married some years later, and from her new home in the United States, wrote to the charitable benefactress to whom she owed the life of both body and soul, telling of her happiness and expressing the warmest sentiments of gratitude and affection.

This work of rescuing fallen women became more familiar to Madame Jetté when she entered upon her widowhood. God led her by degrees towards the accomplishment of His holy will.

One winter's evening the pious woman was on her way to the church as usual, when she met a young girl weeping as if her heart would break.— Madame Jetté stopped and questioned her kindly as to her grief. The poor girl replied: "I am "without a home, and I know not where I am to "pass the night." Examining her face closely, Madame Jetté easily saw what kind of a person she had to deal with; nevertheless, moved with pity, she took her home with her, and during a whole month supplied her every need and endeavored to inspire her with good sentiments. But Madame Jetté's oldest daughter, suspecting for some reason, the intentions of this young woman, determined to watch her. One night, she saw the girl creep stealthily to the bedside of her sleeping mother and bend over her as if she were going to stifle her; then straighten herself up, hesitate and finally go back to her own bed. Informed of what had passed Madame Jetté questioned her protegee, who frankly owned up to having had several violent temptations to kill her benefactress, notwithstanding that she really loved her. It was evidently not prudent to keep such a person in her house any longer, so Madame Jetté sent her away, but not until she had given her one more good meal and exhorted her to lead thenceforth a better life.

The pious widow's zeal was not always so unfruitful. One day, while taking a walk with two of her neighbors, she met two unfortunates who had just been fighting with a young man. The hands of the unhappy creatures were torn and cut, and dripping with blood, and one of them was uttering terrible oaths. Madame Jetté's companions turned away with horror from the wretched women, but she herself, doubtless inspired from above, turned towards them, saying in her heart: "Who knows, if "a single kindly word may not bring them back to "God?" She then affably approached them, and in a gentle and compassionate voice asked them if they found happiness in leading such a life? On hearing these charitable words the unfortunates were touched, and the youngest at once made answer: "I am "very unhappy, I had not lived in this way for two "weeks when I would have wished to give it up. "But who would be willing to receive us now? "Alas we can hope for nothing but scorn and con-"tempt." Madame Jetté replied: "If you sincerely "wish to give up your evil ways, I will show you "the means of doing so." She then advised them to go to Notre-Dame Church, to the confessional of a holy priest, who had already, she knew, helped persons desirous of abandoning a disorderly life. They promised to do as she wished, and the next



RIGHT REV. IGNACE BOURGET,

Second Bishop of Montreal,
Founder of the Order of Miséricorde.

day one of Madame Jetté's daughters made sure with her own eyes that they had been faithful to their promise.

This zeal for the conversion of persons whose condition places them outside the reach of ordinary charity, was soon to be afforded a wider field and receive approbation and encouragement from one who, in virtue of his sacred ministry, was the promoter and supporter of all good works in Montreal: the Right Reverend Ignace Bourget, who was at the time bishop of Montreal. Every one knows the virtues and great works linked with the memory of that illustrious prelate. All the institutions of the Rome of America,—as Montreal is often called,—bear the impress of his powerful hand, and many of them, in fact, owe to him their very existence. His watchful eye discovered all the needs of his flock, and his untiring activity and charity enabled him to create beneficent works, and to multiply the sources of relief by judicious and fervent appeals to the well disposed. His name is written in indelible characters in this city of Montreal, much as it is changed and greatly as it has increased since the days of his episcopate, and even if that name could be wiped out from the memory of men, the walls of the houses of education and charity which were created through his instrumentality would never cease repeating it.

Bishop Bourget was also to take part in the foundation of the work of "La Miséricorde." Before his elevation to the episcopate, he was well acquainted with the Widow Jetté, and God had destined him to make known to her His divine will. In his quality of Father Confessor, he had learned the secret of her good works and directed her by his wise counsels. After becoming a Bishop he more than once sought her intervention in matters requiring delicate handling. Before the asylum of St. Pelagia was opened, he time and again entrusted to her the task of securing a refuge for poor girls who had confided to him the story of their sad position. Madame Jetté took them to her own house or placed them with her children, who overcame their natural repugnance in order to please their mother. She herself carried the new-born infants to the Grey Nunnery, and spared no trouble to bring about the conversion of the guilty mothers, before sending them back into the world.

But what were these few isolated conversions in face of the vast number of victims destroyed by human passions? After the first fall, many poor girls, seeing nothing but dishonor before them, rushed headlong into the abyss of vice. What shall we say of the unfortunate children that shame deprived of motherly care? Alas! they were often exposed

to lose both the life of body and soul. In fact it was no rare thing to find the bodies of new-born infants lying in the streets, or on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

The worthy Pastor was greatly grieved by this crying evil, and prayed to God from the depths of his heart to send him the means of relieving it. His zeal had already caused him to form the project of a special institution destined to receive fallen women, bring them back to a better life, and secure baptism and a Christian education for their children. Madame Jetté seemed to him to be the person chosen by God to lay the first foundation of this new institution destined to relieve so much suffering. However, he did not at once make his plans known to her, but he urged her to pray for his intentions. At the same time he recommended the affair to God, during the holy sacrifice of the mass, and requested the members of the Archconfraternity erected in his Cathedral, in honor of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners, should join their supplications to his and beg for light from heaven in abundance.

When he thought his project sufficiently ripened by prayers and reflections, His Lordship sent for Madame Jetté. The pious widow at once called at the palace without having the least idea of His

Lordship's intentions. With his customary gravity, illuminated by a sweet smile, the Bishop said to her :—" As it has pleased God to make use of you, " in the past, to do much good to these poor chil- " dren, would you not like to continue and extend " this work, by founding a Community, which " would multiply and perpetuate the good you " have so happily commenced ?"

We may well believe that this proposal alarmed the humble woman, and in fact how could it be otherwise ? How many obstacles to be met with on every hand ! Where was she to find pecuniary means ? The Bishop was poor, and the pious widow had hardly anything save her good will—could they rely on public charity in favor of a work that must, from its very nature, necessarily be carried on in seclusion and kept in the shade ?

And yet such were not the difficulties tha weighed heaviest in the humble woman's mind. She relied on the foresight of her Pastor and the Providence of God, for exterior wants and resources. " But how," she said to herself, " could a poor, " ignorant, unqualified woman, destitute of virtue, " as I am, carry out such an important and difficult " undertaking ? " She was then fifty years old :— how could she embrace a state of life that would completely change her habits and mode of living ?

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Looking into the future, she saw herself at the head of a Community, obliged to direct some, to form others, and give to all an example of devotedness and of every virtue becoming in a religious. These considerations made her unworthiness appear more manifest and raised up in her mind a thousand objections. The Bishop did not stop to discuss each question with her, but simply replied with his tone of mild authority which nothing could withstand. "God wills it! God wills it! my daughter; "He will give you the graces you stand in need of "to succeed in this work. But continue praying in "order to assure yourself of His holy will."

When at last Madame Jetté took leave of him, she was entirely overcome. How could the Bishop, she asked herself, think of her for such an important work? She begged God to take from her a burden that seemed too heavy for her to bear. Little by little, however, she recovered her wonted calmness, and with that inward peace came down from heaven a sweet and tranquil light, and Madame Jetté felt that she must give herself up wholly and without further anxiety, to the grace of God.

A few days later she returned to the Bishop and placed herself entirely at his disposal.

It was at once decided that Madame Jetté should leave her home and children as soon as pos-

sible, after having found a house which would answer her purpose. This was done secretly, so as to avoid as far as possible any opposition from the family. Once the house found and rented, Madame Jetté made known her intentions to her children, and entreated them to be as submissive as she herself was, to the will of Divine Providence.—But at the mere idea of being separated from their mother, they could not restrain their grief and left nothing undone to induce her to change her mind. Madame Jetté was greatly affected by this resistance, but she was firmly determined not to give way; nevertheless she wished it to cease before saying farewell to her loved ones, and following the Bishop's advice, she took her children to see him, and His Lordship, by exhorting them in accents pregnant with faith and charity, induced them to submit to the painful sacrifice, and on the 1st of May, 1845, the sacrifice was consummated.

CHAPTER IV

The Foundation.

Infirma mundi elegit Deus ut confundat fortia (1 Cor. I. 27).
But the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong.

DISENGAGED from family ties, Madame Jetté was free to give herself wholly to God, and devote the remainder of her life to the salvation of fallen souls. A celestial attraction drew her on towards this work, and henceforth she would be able to satisfy the passion of self forgetfulness and devotedness that had long tormented her heart; she could now say with the Psalmist: "Lord, Thou hast broken my bonds asunder: I "will offer unto Thee the sacrifice of praise." (Ps. cxv. 7.)—Animated with these fervent dispositions, she took possession of the house which was to be the cradle of the new-born Community.

Humbler beginnings can scarcely be imagined. The house in which Madame Jetté was to begin her new life was on St. Simon Street, now called St. George, and what a house it was! A wretched hovel, built entirely of wood, old and half sunk into the ground. Morever, she had rented only the upper story, which was a kind of garret; the only means of ingress and egress being a ladder. This apartment was large enough, but very low and exposed to all variations of temperature;—in short it was an ice-house in winter and an oven in summer;—the winds passed freely through the gaping joints to be seen on every side. In a word, it was an installation fit to manifest to the world the strength and power of Divine Providence, for God does not need riches in order to accomplish great works.

Full of hope in the future, the pious Bishop gave this poor house the name of "Hospice Ste. Pélagie" in honor of the holy penitent who bore that name.

The furniture was in keeping with the building. It consisted of a few beds and chairs, a table and a stove, with the other indispensable kitchen utensils. The furniture was in great part the generous gift of an eminent Christian, Olivier Berthelet, whose name will often be heard in the course of this history. That apostle of all good works had placed

his fortune at the disposal of Bishop Bourget and seconded his views with the most admirable zeal. The Bishop had only to make known the needs of any particular work,—a simple word or sign was sufficient,—and the good man hastened to help those in distress; among others the work just begun by Madame Jetté. From him she often received aid,—furniture, food, fire-wood and money.

Madame Jetté opened her new institution, with but one "penitent,"—as the women cared for in the Institutions of the Sisters of Miséricorde are called. During the first month two others were received, and the number increased until she often had five, and sometimes eight at a time during the rest of the year. The pious woman gave herself up entirely to her work. Bishop Bourget said later on: "I admired her unshaken confidence in "Divine Providence; I sent her all those who came "to me for assistance, and I gave her very little "money, but she never complained. She worked "with the penitents to provide for their needs, and "she often deprived herself of her own bed in favor "of the sick; at such times she herself slept on "the floor, with a log of wood for her pillow."

It would be hard to give an idea of the hardships and privations that the devoted woman cheerfully underwent. Many a time did she go

without food that her "poor children," as she termed them, might not suffer from hunger.

Resolute in the face of trials, she never looked back, and all the trials, privations and anguish she had to suffer, never caused her to look back with regret to the peaceful life she had hitherto led. Her Bishop's words: "God wills it! God wills it!" were ever ringing in her ears, like a command from above, and she would have walked on burning coals to obey it.

In spite of the poverty of her institution, Madame Jetté could never make up her mind to send away the persons who sought a refuge with her. One evening, a charitable lady living in the neighborhood, brought her a basket of provisions hidden under her long cloak. Madame Jetté did not recognize her on account of the darkness, and thinking she was a new penitent, gave her a motherly welcome and promised to keep her whether she could pay her way or not. We may easily imagine her confusion when she perceived her mistake, but her benefactress was greatly edified by her disinterestedness.

Meantime her children were greatly afflicted by her destitute condition, and tried in vain to persuade her to return to her home with them. Her son Pierre attempted one day to constrain her to do so,

by taking possession of her clothing, but this heroic woman said to him : " Take all that belongs to me, " if you wish, but know that I shall remain here." The family were also keenly wounded by malicious reports circulated in regard to the new work. The kind of charity practised by Madame Jetté was well adapted to invite criticism on the part of worldlings, and their malicious comments filled the air. Some accused her of being a nuisance to society and of dishonoring herself by supporting low degraded creatures. Others, more indulgent, declared openly that she was acting through an ill-judged charity that only served to encourage vice. Greatly disturbed by these allegations, the family accused her of disgracing them publicly, and one of her sisters-in-law went so far as to reproach her with being " the shame and dishonor of the family."

Madame Jetté remained perfectly calm amid the storm, and never was she seen to have lost even for a single instant her customary peace of mind and serenity. In truth, her mind and heart were far more concerned about the sad fate of so many unfortunates, driven without mercy from honest dwellings, and obliged to seek a refuge in places where both body and soul of the new-born children were exposed to the greatest dangers. Moreover, she was working for God and the judgments of the

world gave her little trouble. She might have said with St. Paul: "If I yet pleased men, I "should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal. i. 10.)

Others tried to convince her that her efforts to found a lasting work were useless, and bluntly said: "You will never succeed in founding a Commu- "nity," or "Why take so much trouble with those "wicked girls?" Madame Jetté listened to all this in silence. No one was better convinced than herself that she was unable to found or direct a Community. She realized fully her own weakness and incapacity. But was she not doing the will of God? And who can fight against the Most High? Her only answer was: "God has confided this "undertaking to me, can He not insure its success? "The world's contempt matters little to me, and will "not prevent me from striving to do God's work "with courage. The world is nothing to me, for "what is to be found in it but falsehood and "calumny?"

How utterly common place and trivial are arguments used by worldly people in opposition to the works of God! Each one in turn adopts them as his own, and retails them with an air of profound wisdom. The answer of faith is invariable in its simplicity: "God can do all things, I rely on Him." Madame Jetté had daily occasion to repeat these

words. At times, a celestial ray of light showing a momentary glimpse of the veiled future, seemed to accompany her answers. To a lady who, like many others, had been remonstrating with her and giving her (as she thought) good advice, the pious widow replied : " The day will come, and is not far " distant, when this Community will do a great deal " of good, and you yourself may be glad to avail " yourself of its services." This prediction was fully justified later.

Madame Jetté was not long able to accomplish alone the task of caring for the increasing number of penitents. Bishop Bourget, who watched with jealous care over this new institution, procured her the help of an intelligent widow who had already taken part in founding the work of the Good Shepherd in Montreal.

Sophie Desmarets was born in 1795, at Louiseville, or Rivière du Loup, as it was then called. Her pious parents instilled into her youthful heart love for God and her neighbor, and taught her to practise those simple and modest virtues which are becoming to humble country people. While still young, she went to live in Montreal, where she earned an honest livelihood by sewing. At the age of twenty-two years she was married to Michel Raymond, and became the mother of seven chil-

dren; six of them died young. The one survivor, a boy, cost his mother many a tear. Her life was a continual warfare against her son's misconduct and her husband's prodigality. Left a widow, she gave herself up entirely to good works and, in conjunction with another devoted woman, took the first steps to establish the work of "Le Bon Pasteur." When the Sisters of the order came out from France in 1844, Madame Raymond returned to her family, as she did not deem herself called by Providence to live in that Community.

Then it was that Bishop Bourget conceived the idea of associating her with Madame Jetté.

Obedient to the voice of her Bishop, she bade her loved ones adieu and turned her steps towards the humble Hospice of Ste. Pélagie. The foundress received her with open arms, and she was indeed worthy of taking part in the founding of the good work. By her industry, skill, and self-sacrifice, she was destined to render immense service to the house. Naturally of a lively disposition, gay and open-hearted, she charmed all who knew her by her conversation; at the same time, she was mild and patient, and endowed with great energy and capacity for work. Her past trials, moreover, made her economical and far-sighted in business matters.

Such a recruit was indeed precious. Her entry

took place the 20th of July. She was well known and highly esteemed by Olivier Berthelet, who had witnessed her efforts and sacrifices in the first days of the Good Shepherd Asylum.—Through her influence his sympathy and interest in the poor refuge on St. Simon Street was greatly increased. He made up his mind to visit it, and moved to tears at sight of the extreme poverty of its inmates, he forthwith sent in a generous supply of necessary and useful articles, and, up to the day of his death continued to be, in the words of our chronicles, "the visible Providence of the house." Other charitable persons helped these two courageous widows from time to time, and thus they were able to get through the winter.

Not the least of Madame Jetté's trials this year, was being obliged to go out alone during the night to get the priest or the doctor for the sick or dying. Montreal was not then lit up by electricity, as at present. It was dangerous for a woman to pass unprotected through the dark and deserted streets, on account of the tramps or vagabonds by whom great towns are infested. Armed with her rosary, however, and full of confidence in the protection of the Queen of Heaven, the courageous woman made her way through the darkness to the point where duty called her. No accident ever happened to

her. But, on one occasion, a few days before her death, in a moment of tender converse with one of her penitents, she related that in one of her nocturnal journeys to the presbytery of Notre-Dame, she was followed twice by an enormous black dog, who, pressing his nostrils to her heels, tried to frighten her by his noisy breathing. Her impression at the time was, that the evil spirit under that strange form had tried to cool her zeal by fear, and turn her away from the paths of duty.

Meantime, the house on St. Simon Street was getting too small for the increasing number of penitents, and the time soon came when they were obliged to move elsewhere. Larger and more comfortable quarters (not very hard to find) were rented, on Wolfe Street, consisting of one half of a double house which is still standing and bears the numbers 207 and 209. The building is a large wooden structure, of a good substantial appearance, and two stories high ; in the double pitched roof, on the street side, are four attic windows ; below are six windows in the second story, while the first has only four, two doors being in the middle. Back of the house is a yard, surrounded by sheds on all sides.

Ste. Pélagie was located in the tenement which is now numbered 209,—the house farthest from St. Catherine Street, which is only a short distance

WOLFE STREET HOUSE (1846).

away. On the first floor were the refectory, kitchen, etc.; on the second the Community-room and the Chapel; while the garret was used as a dormitory for all the inmates.

It was a better and larger building than the first, but still much too small, if we remember that as many as eleven penitents were received at the same time. But if the place was somewhat too small for its inmates, there was ample compensation in the assurance of being protected against the severity of the weather, and the inestimable happiness of having a chapel.

This chapel was not a richly ornamented sanctuary; the little wooden altar was trimmed with wall-paper, and adorned with four small jugs for vases (covered with the same material) holding bouquets of paper-flowers, and, on feast-days, a like number of glass or brass candlesticks stood beside the tabernacle. A modest wooden crucifix completed the outfit of this poor chapel, which was to the inmates of the refuge what the oasis is to the weary traveller in the desert. Twice a week,—Sunday and another day,—the pious women were able to assist at the celebration of the Holy Mysteries and to partake of the "Bread of Life" come down from heaven to nourish and strengthen our souls; every day they could, in union with our

Divine Saviour, visit the stations of the sorrowful way of the Cross, renew their courage and forget their own sufferings in the contemplation of our dear Redeemer's passion. What more was needed to make them love the little sanctuary? Was it not, moreover, in their eyes, the pledge of that larger and more magnificent sanctuary, which the God of the Holy Eucharist would one day make His own, and in which He would abide permanently in their midst? The cradle inspires as many hopes as the tomb evokes memories, and this chapel on Wolfe Street,—so small, so humble and so poor—was the cradle where the spirit of the new-born community was developed and strengthened. Hence we may well fancy that getting a glimpse of the future in the bright light at times vouchsafed in prayer, Madame Jetté must have many a time humbled herself before the Almighty, for having chosen her to lay the foundations of so noble an undertaking.

Meanwhile Divine Providence brought associate workers to the two pious widows. This was needed in order to enable Bishop Bourget to organize the religious life in the house. Elisabeth Tailleur, of St. Benoît was the first to enter. She, however, did not persevere. Lucie Benoît and a widow, Madame Clément Montrais, née Geneviève Salois

were the next. After a few months' trial, the latter's health seemed to fail and she was not permitted to enter the new Order, but as a special favor, stayed with them until her death. It was altogether different with Miss Benoît, whom we shall find a religious later on, and who remained faithful to her first vocation.

She was twenty-eight years old when she bade adieu to her family, and gave up the world in order to share Madame Jetté's life of self-sacrifice and help her in her undertakings. Until then her life had been spent under the shelter of the paternal roof, which was only separated from the new hospital by the width of the street. She saw and appreciated the work with her own eyes, and well knew all the sacrifices awaiting her, but her courage enabled her to meet trials without fear, and the cheerfulness of her disposition, united to the most amiable simplicity of character, constituted a priceless adjunct to a life in which thorns and crosses were to be, as it were, her daily bread.

This association of five persons desirous of consecrating themselves to God, and serving Him in one and the same work, permitted Bishop Bourget to draw the outlines of the new rule. On Sunday, July 26th, 1846, His Lordship celebrated Mass at the home, made known the rule to be followed

thenceforth, and at the same time established and opened the Novitiate. There being as yet no Professed Sisters, he was compelled to choose a Superior from among the new novices, and Madame Raymond was the one designated to perform that duty "*pro tempore.*"

The Penitents were not forgotten. As early as the preceding month of March, the Bishop had laid down for them the first rudiments of a rule which he finished on this same day, without, however, making it obligatory and binding forthwith.

About the same time, His Lordship confided the spiritual direction of the institution to Rev. Antoine Rey, an aged French priest, residing at the episcopal palace. This venerable ecclesiastic, a man austere in appearance and of a still more austere life, was in reality, mild, kindly and full of zeal; he reminded one of the French clergy of by-gone days: —dignified in manner, amiable, yet self-restrained, —sincerely devoted, but imbued with that spirit of extreme severity with which Jansenism had, so to speak, poisoned the very air.

A resolute advocate of fasting and abstinence, he himself never ate meat and in fact took but little food of any kind. Perhaps, in his great ardor for the practice of mortification, he did not make sufficient allowance for the painful circumstances in

which the community lived; but nevertheless, it must be admitted that, by his attentive and assiduous care, his pressing exhortations and good example, he contributed greatly to the formation of the spirit of the Institution. Could anyone, in truth, carry farther the virtues of humility and self-forgetfulness than did the pious chaplain? One night, when he was at the Gray Nuns' Hospital, he fell asleep while reading, and his lighted candle set the bed-curtains afire; he awoke half stifled by the smoke and, without permitting the Nuns who had hastened to his help to enter the room, he put out the fire with his own hands, burning them both severely. The danger once over, he made light of the intense pain his burned hands caused him, craved forgiveness from the Sisters for having exposed the house to a great calamity, and in the morning, with the Bishop's permission, went as usual to the Chapel of Ste. Pélagie, there to offer up, with his maimed hands, the holy sacrifice, in gratitude and thanksgiving to the Almighty for his wonderful escape.

Under the influence of their fervent director, the pious novices vied with one another in generosity, and the penitents, in whom he took a truly paternal interest, opened their souls to the grace of God and were inspired with a desire to amend their lives. We have in our possession the original

manuscript of two sets of rules drafted by him, under the inspiration and control of Bishop Bourget, one for the Sisters and another for the Penitents. A glance over these pages will give a better idea of the spirit and life of the little community than any possible description.

The manuscript opens with a table enumerating the qualities with which a person must be endowed who wishes to become a member of the "Congrégation de Sainte-Pélagie." The rule requires of her: regularity, mutual forbearance, the desire of attaining perfection, obedience, the avoiding of familiarity, the cordial accepting of such admonitions as are deemed necessary.

After having set forth the particular end for which the Institute was founded, to wit; exercise of spiritual and corporal mercy towards fallen women,—the author dwells at length on the virtues essential to the religious life,—and in particular fraternal union, poverty, obedience, humility. The "associates" are each year to make an eight days' retreat, and devote one day every month to prepare themselves for death. Weekly confession and Communion, daily meditation during a half hour, the recitation of the Rosary and spiritual reading, are also required by the Rule.

The order of exercises for each day is about the

same as in the majority of religious communities: the hour for rising is five o'clock; at half past five meditation; at six mass; breakfast at seven; reciting of the beads at eleven and at half past eleven dinner. The interval between seven and eleven is devoted to work which is continued in the afternoon from one o'clock to six,—the hour for supper —with no interruption save the spiritual reading. A little before eight o'clock work is resumed again until nine, thereafter strict silence is observed till after breakfast the next morning. This rule, with a few slight modifications, is that which is still followed by the Sisters of Miséricorde, so we need not refer to it again.

The rule laid down for the penitents in its leading features, is the same. Piety and work fill up their day, but they are not obliged to take part in the exercises peculiar to the religious life. They must obey and respect their superiors, maintain peace and charity among themselves and observe, within certain limits, the rule of silence, without which a community life would be an impossibility. Among the rules concerning them there are some which are really touching ones, so instinct are they with the delicacy of faith and charity. Take for instance this rule :—" The penitents shall each adopt a " pseudonym in place of her family name,(1) so as to

(1) In 1851, the pseudonym was changed to a Saint's name.

" safeguard their own honor as well as that of their " relatives."

Another rule reads as follows: "Each person " admitted shall put aside all jewelry and other orna- " ments conducive to vanity, and shall dress modestly " and in a manner befitting a true penitent." The Sisters strove above all things to infuse into their hearts the spirit of true penitence, and so help them lay the foundations of a new life. Hardly had these rules been inaugurated at the Institution on Wolfe Street, when the following postulants presented themselves for admission: during the month of September, Lucie Lecourtois, and a widow by the name of Josepte Galipeau; and in October, Justine Filion. With these postulants came three others who did not persevere. The noviciate was then composed of twelve members. The first new postulant, Lucie Lecourtois, was born at l'Assomption in 1810. After a youth spent in piety and the practice of virtue, she came to Montreal to reside, and chose for her spiritual director, Bishop Bourget, whose counsel enabled her, as it did so many other souls, to discover the will of God. Hers was a soul endowed with strong faith and tender piety, a soul firm and courageous in all trials, filled with unlimited confidence in Divine Providence and affectionate charity for her neighbor. The qualities most different in

appearance were thus harmoniously united in this richly endowed nature, and all these gifts were crowned by a truly filial devotion towards the Blessed Virgin.

When Madame Galipeau, then forty-seven years old, first entered Ste. Pélagie, she had known the vicissitudes of life, and had acquired an amount of experience in the management of affairs that was destined to be of great benefit to the community. Tall and robust in stature, with a countenance stately and dignified and a quick and penetrating eye, her whole appearance announced a superior woman, well fitted for organizing and commanding. Nevertheless, the poverty and difficulties inseparable from a new foundation had alone attracted her to the refuge. When, after an eight days' retreat at the convent of the Sisters of Providence, she declared to Bishop Bourget that she had a decided preference for the poor house on Wolfe Street, she was doubtless far from anticipating the important part she was to take in the new foundation.

Endowed with humbler qualities, Justine Filion was also destined to render eminent services to the community. A pupil of the convent of the Sisters of the Congregation, at Terrebonne, her native place, she received from those excellent teachers, together with a solid education, the spirit of order and reli-

gion which were the most distinctive features of her character. The ruling motive of her life was expressed in the words which were always her motto: "Serve God and for love of Him do good " to your neighbor." She at first taught a country-school, but soon gave up that position in order to devote herself to rearing her orphaned nephews. She performed this task with a mother's devotedness. Later on, carried away by zeal and setting human prudence aside, she opened her house to the poor and unfortunate, whom she taught, fed, and clothed. In this undertaking her small means soon vanished, and as public charity did not fulfil her hopes nor respond to her appeals for help, she had to give up the attempt, happy nevertheless in having sacrificed all "for God and His poor." Then it was that she turned her attention towards Madame Jetté's institution. The new work attracted her, for it promised to satisfy her thirst for self-sacrifice, but what humiliations, privations and sacrifices, did it not involve! The malicious and evil-minded, always greedy for new scandals, criticised without reserve or mercy these poor defenceless women, who said not a word in reply but went on with their work, anxious only to please God. Meantime a conflict was going on in Justine Filion's heart. Tired of this state of uncertainty, and worn

out with anxiety, she one day took refuge in the Cathedral and prostrating herself before the altar, consulted God in prayer. What passed between the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle and His servant, no one ever knew, but certain it is that the pious woman rose to her feet calm and resolute, and joined the little group in that humble "guest chamber" where, in silence and prayer, the future order of the "Sisters of Miséricorde" was being formed. This was on October 8th, 1846.

A few days previous to that date, Bishop Bourget had started for Rome, leaving to Bishop Prince, his coadjutor, the care of the administration. Bishop Prince was not only a distinguished theologian, he was also an enlightened director and a zealous patron and promoter of every species of good work.

The religious of the Good Shepherd and the Sisters of Providence had already found in him a safe and devoted guide; but they were not the only ones to benefit from his direction and care,—Ste. Pélagie was also about to profit greatly by it.

The coadjutor Bishop visited the house on November 6th, and, after having offered up the Holy Sacrifice, proceeded to hold a general election for the several offices in the house. "After having "invoked," says the official record, "the light of the "Holy Ghost and the protection of the Blessed Vir-

" gin, we have taken the votes of the present twelve " members of this Community, and we find the " nominations to the several offices to be as follows : " Madame Jetté is elected superior ; Madame Gali- " peau, assistant ; the remaining offices are divided " among the others."

The Bishop signified his approval of this election by an authentic deed, which is carefully kept in the archives of the Order. It is worthy of note that he gave to the new associates the name of " Ladies of Charity ; " also, that he refrained from naming a Mistress of Novices " as they are all in " the novitiate, the Bishop and the Director of the " house will, by their advice and instructions, do " what is needed in that behalf."

Bishop Prince watched over the work of the new community with fatherly solicitude ; he often inquired about the progress of the novices in the practice of the religious virtues, and rejoiced when he saw their fervor and piety. Towards the end of November, judging that it was time for them to change their worldly garments for the religious habit, he visited the house and gave its inmates an instruction replete with solid doctrine and unction in relation to the religious habit, and the interior dispositions it implies : he then filled the hearts of the Superiors with joy and delight by telling them,

that after having reflected a long time before God, he was persuaded that they should delay no longer in clothing themselves with the garments of the Spouses of Christ.

He himself indicated the form and color of the new habit and fixed the date of the reception for the first day of December. This simple costume was to consist of a black habit and cape, with a white cap and a collar of the same color. The novices accepted it lovingly as a heaven-sent garment. Detained elsewhere by important business, Bishop Prince could not come as he wished at the time appointed, so the Reception took place without the usual ceremonies. Nevertheless the novices were happy and joyous and from their hearts rose hymns of thanksgiving, at the thought of the innumerable blessings showered upon them. The Holy Habit seemed to them a sufficient recompense for all the trials and bitterness of the past and a sure pledge of future happiness. Ten of the novices received it. Two of the "Associates" had left, a short time before, not being fitted to this kind of life, but before long they were replaced by two new candidates:—Adelaïde Lauzon and Sophie Bibeau, who later on became excellent religious.

Yielding to the suggestions of her great love for her dear penitents, the venerable Mother Superior

solicited and obtained for them, not indeed a complete costume, but at least a few distinctive parts of one; they were given a white cap and veil, also a medal of the Blessed Virgin fastened to a black ribbon which they wore around their neck; but these articles were expensive, and after a short time they were laid aside and black caps and veils were adopted.

In the meantime the Novitiate went on as usual. It was, in truth, an exceptional novitiate, very far from being in conformity with the idea that the word awakens in the mind! Who does not picture it to himself as a place of retreat, a peaceful solitude, where the trouble and noise of the world are unknown, where the soul alone with her God lives a life of silence, meditation and prayer? And such is, in reality, the ordinary and normal aspect of the novitiate in religious communities.

But, under the unavoidable pressure of necessity, altogether different was the spectacle afforded by the little novitiate on Wolfe Street. There were, as we have said, hours for prayer and recollection, but was it not also necessary to provide for the ever increasing wants of the Community? Were the novices to give up, for a time, the practice of works of mercy for which the institution was founded? Such a thing could not be thought of;

so with that hearty good will which heaven blesses and filial confidence in God, the novices with their venerable Mother for their guide, without a moment's hesitation and their hearts in peace, accepted for their share the twofold part of Martha and Mary.

And we can say with certainty that if Martha's was not the better part, it was in no way less considerable or less arduous than Mary's. If we for a moment reflect upon the insufficient size of the house for so many inmates, the many kinds of work to be done and the extreme poverty which reigned within its walls, we shall have no trouble in forming an idea of the activity needed to supply all wants.

The most spacious apartment on the ground floor became on one and the same day, by turns : kitchen, refectory, laundry, soap-house, drying and ironing-room. An old cooking-stove placed in the centre of the room, served to cook the poor victuals for the household, boil the water, heat the flat-irons, etc., and on certain days to melt the wax out of which Justine Filion's skilled hands made the tapers that were to burn on the altar. Need we be surprised then if the dinner was sometimes burnt? On such occasions Lucie Benoît usually made known the fact to her father, who lived just across the way, and that charitable neighbor would share with the poor community the food prepared for his own family.

At night the community-room, on the second floor, was changed into a dormitory for the penitents and the Sisters betook themselves to the garret. This distressing state of things lasted several months. To alleviate it, Bishop Prince rented the ground floor of the other half of the house and placed the penitents there. Being thenceforth out of the way of general supervision, they required a special directress.

This charge was given to Lucie Lecourtois, who accepted it with fear and trembling. But Madame Jetté reassured her, saying: "These poor children "are better than you think, go and be without fear." Experience proved that her confidence was not exaggerated. The penitents were obedient, and in regard to piety and industry their conduct was all that could well be hoped for. The sight of the great privations which the novices gladly imposed upon themselves, in order to lighten the burthen for their penitents, touched them to the heart. They became greatly attached to the house, and many of them manifested a heartfelt desire to remain and share the life and labors of those to whom, next to God Himself, they owed their return to virtue and honor. But the house was so small! In fact there was barely room for those who already belonged to the household there. There was nothing

for it, therefore, but to send the poor girls back into the world where, in not a few cases, their irreproachable conduct was rewarded by an honorable marriage; or if an irresistible attraction retained them in that solitude of the soul which is the fruit of penance and prayer; they bade adieu to their benefactors and resumed their life of reparation in the cloister of the Good-Shepherd.

About this period it was that the penitents, by a spontaneous act on their part, began to give to their directresses the name of "Mother." They had hitherto addressed them as "Mademoiselle," but the word did not express the sentiments of their hearts; so they agreed amongst themselves to replace it by a sweeter one, by that name which is the symbol of the strongest, highest, most generous and disinterested love to be found on earth. This usage has been faithfully perpetuated in the Community, where all the professed nuns are called "Mother" by the penitents, Magdelenes, etc.

Such marks of love and gratitude were a great consolation to the novices in the midst of the constantly recurring sufferings resulting from poverty. They lived with the strictest economy. A little bread and butter and a few potatoes often formed their whole bill of fare; and yet this frugal manner of living did not always enable them to avoid con-

tracting debts. But God never abandons His little ones ; and in their greatest necessities some generous soul would always come forward when the time came to settle their accounts. Bishop Bourget had authorized Mr. Benoît to assist the Community in its necessities whenever he himself failed to do so. That good christian on every occasion acquitted himself of the task with zeal enhanced by his fatherly love.

Other wealthy and charitable persons soon became inscribed as benefactors of the new-born Institution. We have already mentioned Olivier Berthelet, to whose name and memory no words of ours can do justice ; we must not omit the Pinsonnault family, and in particular one of its most illustrious members, the future Bishop (1) of London, at the time a Sulpician priest.

As it will readily be believed, the Cathedral clergy were not the last to give a helping hand to the little Community. What consoling memories and at the same time what sentiments of gratitude are linked

(1) Pinsonnault, (Mgr. Pierre-Adolphe 1815-1883), born at St. Philippe, P.Q., was educated at the College of Montreal, went to Paris, where he studied theology and was ordained priest in 1840. He left the Society of St. Sulpice in 1849 to enter the Bishop's palace at Montreal, where he became titular canon in 1851. Promoted to the newly-erected See of London, he was consecrated Bishop by Mgr. de Charbonnel, in 1856. He removed his See to Sandwich in 1859 and resigned in 1866. From that time he lived a retired life at Sault-au-Récollet, and later at the Episcopal residence in Montreal.

with the names of Fathers Truteau (1) and Plamondon ; both of them titular canons, and the first named destined to become Vicar-General of the Diocese.

To the second, Bishop Bourget intrusted the administration of the temporal affairs of the house. The duties of his new position were not very complicated and consisted rather in giving than in managing, as the following incident will show. One Sunday, the Bishop, accompanied by Father Plamondon (2), paid a visit to the house, and when they were going through the refectory, the latter noticed that only a small piece of butter remained for the community breakfast ; he mentioned the fact to the Bishop, who said : " Have you no money with you, " Canon ? " at the same time putting his hand in his own pocket. Both contributed according to their means, and that day, Justine Filion, who was the provider of the house, was enabled to make an extraordinary purchase, having received five shillings.

Canon Truteau used to say jestingly : " There is " no such thing as entering this house without

(1) Truteau (Alexis-Frédéric 1808-1873), after having finished his course of studies at the College of Montreal, remained in that institution as a Professor and at the same time studie l theology. Was ordained priest in 1830, called to the Episcopal residence the next year by Mgr. Lartigue ; became secretary in 1835 and Vicar-General in 1847.

(2) L.-T. Plamondon (1812-1882), born at St. Hyacinthe, made a course of studies at Montreal College, was ordained priest in 1843, and made Procurator of the diocese ; canon in 1851 ; retired into private life in the Hotel-Dieu in 1881, where he died in 1882.

" paying." Its poverty was indeed great, and help was much needed. The Hotel-Dieu nuns and the Sulpician Fathers deemed it their duty to help the house and secure for it means of support.

Even the poor man's mite was not wanting. And in particular that of one who had chosen voluntary poverty for his lot, and who died about thirty years ago. He was well known to the people of Montreal by the name of " Père Beaudry." His life, if written, would form one of the most beautiful pages in the history of " private charity " in Ville-Marie. Having distributed all his money to the poor, and given his lands to the Seminary of St. Sulpice, Mr. Beaudry took up his abode at the Seminary on Notre-Dame Street. He started from the Seminary every morning, with his wallet on his back,—after having heard two or three Masses,—and begged throughout the city and specially on the market-place, where he was well known by all. The butchers used to give him shanks of beef, calves' or sheep's heads, and remnants of meat which was sometimes anything but fresh.

" Père Beaudry," his cane in one hand, and steadying his well-filled wallet on his bent back with the other, would then wend his way to the house on Wolfe Street, or, at times, towards some other community in like distress. If at times the sensitive

feelings of some novice suffered from his blunt and abrupt manner which in truth, the good old man put on in order to avoid that vain complacency to which the very purest souls are exposed unconsciously to give way in face of gratitude, the Community itself, on the other hand, was greatly indebted to him for his charity and devotedness.

Thanks to the help thus received, the winter of 1846-1847 was not as hard as the preceding one. The Sisters still had, it is true, to clear away the snow which had gathered around the house during the night ; saw and split with their own hands the fire-wood for heating and cooking, and do many other tasks of a like nature ; but they performed with cheerful hearts whatsoever necessity imposed upon them, and in short all were happy to submit and adopt themselves in all things to the will of God.

Superior and Infirmarian, at one and the same time, Madame Jetté gave the example of activity, courage and all the other virtues which her new position demanded. A holy emulation reigned among the novices ; all were eager to take part in sitting up nights with the sick or doing the hardest and most repulsive work. This was also to be seen in their numerous journeys to Notre-Dame Church where they carried the new-born infants to be baptized. Nothing could be more humiliating and

mortifying than the treatment inflicted on those who performed that heroic work.

The public seemed to have a settled antipathy in regard to the new work. At the sight of one of the Sisters, passers-by turned their heads aside, others insolently laughed, while some, more daring than the rest, laid hands upon the burden, which those pious women tried to conceal, and overwhelmed them with abusive language. On Sundays and holydays the task became more difficult and more humiliating still, on account of the crowd. The Sisters were often obliged to elbow their way to the holy font, and there they sometimes had to wait several hours on account of the great number of infants to be baptized. This was not all. Once baptized the infants had to be carried to the Grey Nunnery, so that the poor novice must set out again with a prospect of enduring fresh insults and humiliations. At such times the relatives or friends, who had done all in their power to prevent the novices from entering the new Community, would meet them with scornful and angry looks and even with bitter or sarcastic words. One of the novices stated that on one such occasion she had nearly fainted ; another was so terrified that she was tempted to leave the poor screaming infant on the roadside and run away. In spite of all

these sacrifices so peculiarly hard and crucifying for human nature, these journeys to Notre-Dame created a noble rivalry between the novices, for like the Apostles, they rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

CHAPTER V

New Trials.

Gloriamur in tribulationibus: scientes quod tribulatio patientiam operatur: patientia autem probationem (Rom. v. 3-4).

We glory also in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience trial.

A YEAR had passed since the day when Madame Jetté established her little colony on Wolfe Street. Although far from sharing the malevolent feelings of many persons towards the new Community, the proprietor of the house, feared that discredit would also fall on his property and diminish its value; he therefore notified the Superior that she must seek quarters elsewhere.

On being made aware of the notice to quit, Bishop Prince instructed Rev. Mr. Rey to look for a house suitable for the Community. During two weeks, the devoted chaplain travelled all over the city,

but it was useless; every one had a horror of the hospital, its neighborhood was shunned and the owners of houses considered that they would incur public disgrace by furnishing quarters for the institution. Sharp criticism and hard words were, moreover, unsparingly lavished on the poor chaplain and the devoted and courageous women. "Why "did not they leave these wretches in the street?" "Was not misery and suffering more likely to cor- "rect them than pity? And what compassion are "such persons worthy of?" In the eyes of the world, it was simply encouraging vice to throw the mantle of charity over these poor girls, who, either through a sudden impulse, through weakness or the enticement of strong passion, had fallen into the abyss of shame. All doors were pitilessly shut against them, as of old the inns of Bethlehem in view of the poor and humble aspect of Mary and Joseph.

Touched to the heart by this want of success in so many quarters and above all by these affronts offered to holy charity, and which imperilled the very existence of the hospital, Bishop Prince went himself to the house on April 6th. After celebrating Holy Mass, he called the Sisters together and urged them to solicit, by fervent prayers, the help of Divine Providence for their institution. "The posi-

" tion in which you are now placed, he said, is a " very difficult one; you have no refuge; your " Community will perish if God does not come to " your assistance; you must pray with fervor. " But God will not abandon you; He does not for- " get all you have done for love of Him. Let us " entreat Him to help us, through the intercession " of St. Pelagia. This very day we must begin a " novena in honor of your patroness, so that we " may ask her to secure for you a home where you " may carry on your work. You know what peo- " ple do when in danger of perishing: they cry out " for help with all their strength; do the same, " pray with faith and confidence, say from the bot- " tom of your hearts: *St. Pelagia, pray for us!*" And the Bishop, falling on his knees, in the midst of the poor Sisters, whose hearts were saddened by the prospect before them, (and how could it be otherwise?) but full of hope in Him who holds in his hands the hearts of men; commenced the novena by reciting aloud a chaplet of invocations to the holy Patroness of the Hospital.

Continued with entire confidence, the novena ended on April 14th, with, as yet, no apparent result, and there was but little time left. The next day, Bishop Prince went himself to see a proprietor in the neighborhood, Mr. Donegani. The success of

his undertaking surpassed all his hopes, for that gentleman not only consented to let the Sisters have his house, but to give it up to them free of charge, and for an unlimited period of time!

On receiving this good news, the Community gave way to transports of delight and the next day, at the suggestion of His Lordship, they began a novena of thanksgiving to the Saint whose helping hand had been so manifest in their deliverance.

From that day forth also, devotion to St. Pelagia increased wonderfully in the little Community. The Sisters invoked her with tender and confiding piety, and it would be impossible to say how many spiritual and temporal favors were obtained through her intercession, more specially in behalf of the poor penitents.

The house to which the Hospital was about to be removed was on the south-east corner of St. Catherine and St. André Streets. It is still standing, but so changed that the visitor, who would fain discover some vestiges of a holy and glorious past, can today see but a common restaurant.

The aspect of the new Hospital was quite as modest as the first, perhaps even less regular in outline and less pleasing to the eye. But it was much larger. On the first story, there was room for the parlor, the Community hall, the refectory, the

kitchen and even the laundry. On the second floor was the Chapel, the penitents' room, the Sisters' dormitory, and even a small office for the clergy. The third story was set apart for the penitents' dormitory and the infirmary. Adjoining the house was a garden.

The Community moved into their new quarters on April 26th. There was more room than in the old house, but how much weary work had still to be done to render it fit for use! The trials of the Sisters during the first few weeks were extremely severe, on account of the many privations they endured. All their previous sufferings were as nothing compared to what they now endured. Whatever little meat they were able to procure, and all that was sent in by charitable people, was given to the penitents. The Sisters were reduced to living on bread and water; and it is not surprising to read that they were on the verge of sinking under the strain of their incessant labors.

During this general distress, Madame Jetté gave to all an example of courage and confidence in God. She knew that it was one of those trials to which, by a special permission of Divine Providence, such new undertakings are subjected, and which, when generously endured, but serve to cause the spirit of self-denial and sacrifice to take deeper root and

gain strength. Who could have been better qualified than she to imbue with these sentiments the minds and hearts of her companions? She thanked God from the depths of her heart, when she saw that they too were brave and resigned in face of such a discouraging position.

But these courageous women did not give way to useless fear and repining ; they knew the proverb : " Help thyself, and heaven will help thee " and worked hard for their living. While Madame Raymond and some others were sewing, Madame Jetté herself made soles for several shoemakers, or took in washing. As they were often not well paid for their work, they had recourse to begging. Each morning one of the Sisters went to the market ; but how many bitter words and foul taunts accompanied the feeble alms she received, God alone knows !

Things had come to this point when Bishop Bourget returned from the eternal City, in May 1847. One of his first visits was to his afflicted daughters. The extreme poverty in which he found them touched him greatly. He laid it upon them as a duty, for the future, to let him know their wants should they ever again fall into such a state of constraint and poverty. To meet their most pressing wants, he gave them all the money he had with him, which amounted to eight dollars.

On returning to his residence he gave such further aid as showed that he did not forget those whose need he had just ascertained. No sooner did he receive some gift or present which could be used in the Hospital, than he immediately sent it to the Sisters, and many a time disposed of the collection taken up at the Cathedral on Sunday, in favor of this work so dear to his heart.

Meantime, the hour had come when God was to call upon the community to make one of the most meritorious sacrifices which it could then offer Him.

Borne hither by the unfortunate Irish emigrants, mercilessly banished from their island-home by English eviction, the typhus fever had cast its baneful pall over the city of Montreal. The poor emigrants, wasted by the pangs of hunger and exhausted by all the sufferings of a long sea voyage, perished by thousands on the shores of the St. Lawrence, where the ships had landed them. With that quiet heroism born of charity and trust in God, the clergy, the religious communities and even a large number of pious lay-people went to the help of those unfortunate victims of the plague. Eight priests and ten Sisters proved their courage and devotedness by the loss of their lives. Among the first stricken down were Bishop Bourget and his coadjutor; they, no doubt, owed their recovery

to the ardent prayers offered up to the Almighty entreating Him to spare those two precious lives.

The Sisters in charge of Ste. Pélagie were also eager to join the ranks of those who were fighting the dread disease, but the Bishop informed them that they must not think of doing so "on account "of their penitents." Their chaplain, the venerable M. Rey, replaced them on the field of honor, on which he was doomed to fall.

From Point St. Charles, that is to say, the western extremity of the city, where he was stationed in attendance on the sick, he daily came on foot to offer up the Divine Sacrifice at the Hospital; then, without taking any of those precautions which prudence dictates under such circumstances, without relaxing in the very slightest degree his practice of mortification regarding his food, he went forth to face all the overwhelming labors of his ministry, and the poisonous atmosphere in which sickness and death held sway. His strength soon gave out. The last time he offered the Holy Sacrifice in the Community Chapel he was so feeble that he was hardly able to stand. Completely exhausted by the effort he made in saying Mass, he fainted away during his thanksgiving. Madame Jetté, justly alarmed, wished to send him home in a carriage, but he would never consent to it; he made his way

on foot to the Cathedral, and from thence proceeded to the Hotel-Dieu, which he was never to leave alive. He died a holy death, on July 27th, 1847.

During his sickness, which was short, Madame Jetté and Madame Galipeau went to see him, but this holy priest, whose soul seemed already to be filled with that heaven it was about to enter, refused them admittance to his room; he, however, sent them his thanks for their visit, assuring them that he would remember their "work" before God; and commending his soul to the pious prayers of the Community.

Soon after, the terrible plague threatened to secure victims in the Hospital itself. Two of the novices were taken sick. If the disease spread it meant the ruin of the institution and the complete destruction of a work most necessary in a growing city such as Montreal. The Bishop resolved to have recourse to supreme means to arrest the progress of the disease. He sent to the venerable Superior of the Community by the hands of their new chaplain, the Rev. Louis Sachè, S.J.; a relic of Blessed Beatrice d'Este, a gift of His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, and in order, no doubt, to incite the Community to pray with greater fervor, he sent them word that he would give the relic to the Providence nuns, if the Saint did not work any cures in their Hospital.

The relic was exposed in the Chapel with all the solemnity possible, and the Community immediately began a novena. The result was soon manifest, and a few days afterwards, the two novices had quite recovered, their rapid restoration to health being looked upon as truly miraculous. One of the novices thus cured was Lucie Benoît, of whom we have already spoken in this history. Through gratitude for the Saint she decided to adopt her name at the first profession and place herself under her special patronage. The devotion to St. Beatrice was from that time forth in great repute in the Community, and whenever a contagious disease broke out in the city, and seemed to be about to invade the Hospital, the relic was exposed amid fervent prayers and supplications, and the confidence thus exhibited was never found to be misplaced.

The joy over these unhoped for cures was still at its height when a fresh trial cast the shadow of death over the house. During the same summer, 1847, Madame Montrais was taken away. Eminently pious, and gifted with an amiable simplicity and goodness, combined with entire devotedness to duty, she had accomplished much for the Community, and had won the esteem and affection of her companions. A few months before her death, her health began to fail, so that she felt herself unable

to continue her novitiate and after seeking the advice of her director, she decided to give it up. Nevertheless, she asked the Bishop and Madame Jetté, as a special favor, to permit her to end her days in the house she loved so much. The favor was granted, and this pious lady, who could have lived at ease and comfort, at home, shut herself up in the poverty of this obscure anddiscredited establishment, there to devote herself to the most humble duties, until the day when the Divine Spouse invited her to enter into the glories and splendors of His kingdom.

A Jesuit, Father Louis Saché (1), succeeded M. Rey as chaplain. He was filled with the zeal of a true apostle. His goodness and charity, as we read in the annals of the Good-Shepherd Convent of Quebec, were inexhaustible, but veiled under a cold and placid countenance, which no passing events, it would seem, ever sufficed to disturb. He was naturally of an austere temperament. The

(1) Louis-Césaire Saché was born in a village of La Touraine, (France), in 1813, entered the Society of Jesus in 1840 and came to Montreal in 1845. Three years were devoted to the work of the ministry in the city or at Laprairie. In 1848 he was named director of the College at Ste. Thérèse. The next year, he founded the residence of Quebec, was called to the post of Master of Novices at Sault-au-Récollet in 1853, remaining there until 1862 when he was appointed Rector of St. Mary's College (1862-65); was sent back to Sault-au-Récollet in 1866; in 1871 was sent to the United States and in 1881 to Quebec. Celebrated his golden Jubilee in 1888, and died in Quebec October 24th, 1889. His memory is still cherished by many in that city.

Community hoped much from his zeal and his spirit of faith, and he was becoming attached to the work just in proportion as its many needs impressed themselves upon his mind, when his Superior's orders called him elsewhere.

He was replaced by a priest, who, although young in years, was distinguished by eminent qualities. Bishop Bourget had recently called him to the Cathedral and bestowed on him the title of Canon. Venant Pilon (1) was a man of God. In accepting the mission confided to his care by the Bishop he did not hide from himself, either the importance of the task he was about to attempt, which was to form privileged souls to a life of perfection and the spirit of their order; or the criticism to which he would be exposed on account of his youth and the peculiar character of the work intrusted to him.

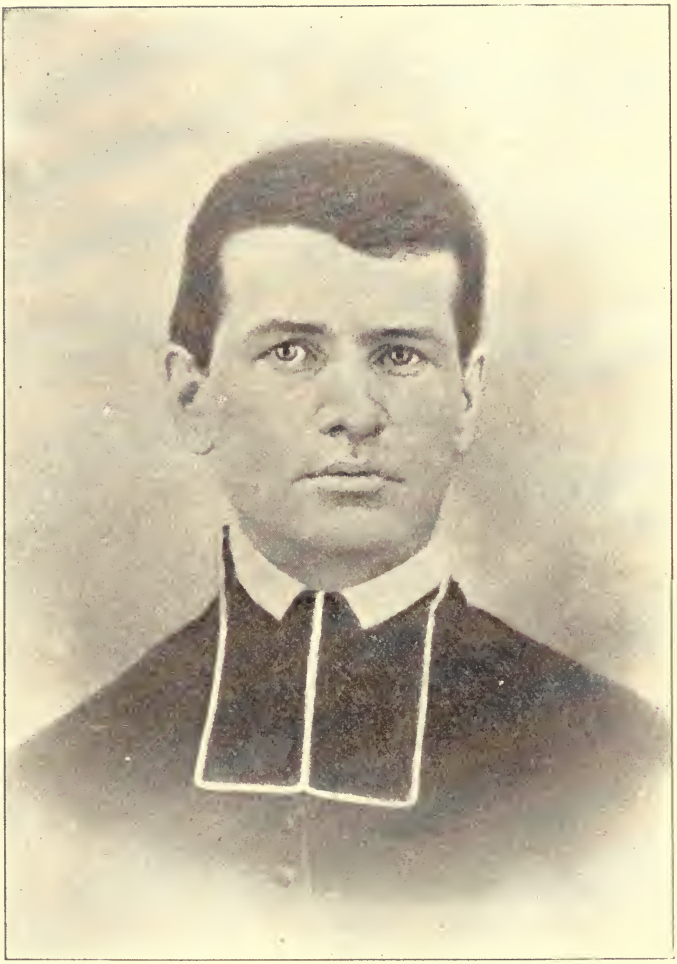
Many priests still entertained doubts about the Hospital. In the first place, they said, it was a new Community,—a capital grievance in the eyes of some,—and then, to say nothing of its object, which seemed to be of uncertain utility,—how could it possibly get out of the poverty in which it had

(1) Pilon (Venant) (1822-1860), was born at St. Geneviève, P.Q. After a brilliant course of studies at the College of l'Assomption, he remained in that establishment as a professor, while pursuing also the study of theology. Ordained priest in 1845, he was for a time director of the College of Chambly; named Canon in 1847, he divided his time between preaching, and the Chaplaincy of the Community of Miséricorde, until his death. His body lies in the vault of the Community Chapel.

been struggling for the last two years, especially at a time when so many other rising institutions, unquestionably more useful, were appealing to the charity of the faithful ?

These objections must also doubtless have occurred to M. Pilon, but, remembering that "the thoughts " and ways of men are not the thoughts and ways " of God," he gave himself up to his duties with that zeal and devotedness derived from motives elevated high above the things of earth and time, which are proof against the assaults of the one and the inconstancy of the other.

He saw from the first that, in the then state of the Community, — with no definite rules, no vows, customs or traditional spirit, he must not confine himself to the work of a director of souls, but, in the general interest of the house he must also become Master of Novices. It was a great undertaking with his feeble constitution, but the future of the Community depended on it and M. Pilon did not for a moment hesitate. He presided over all the daily exercises and taught the novices how to acquit themselves of those that seemed most difficult, such as : the chapter of faults, fraternal correction and direction. In order to surround those exercises with all the respect inspired by religion, he wished that the novices should perform them in presence



REV. CANON V. PILON,

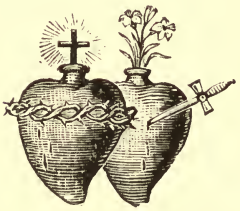
Chaplain from 1847 to 1860.

of the Holy Eucharist, a sure way of accomplishing them with a fitting spirit of faith and humility.

To these weekly exercises, which are still observed in the Community, were added a few others which have since been abolished. The annals tell us of a habit the associates had of avowing to the Superior, each evening, all violations of the rule committed during the day, also giving her an account of the manner they had occupied their minds. Fasting on Friday was then observed, but in view of the difficultes and drawbacks it occasioned, the practice was, a few years later, given up.

Thus was the new family with which God wished to endow and gladden His Church, formed in the shade, in prayer and in the exercise of the humblest offices of charity. Two years had now been spent in laying, amidst humiliations of every kind, the deep, solid and immovable foundations of that true and sincere humility which St. Augustine deems essential for every spiritual structure that is to escape ruin : " Do you aspire to become great ?— " then begin by being little. Do you wish to raise " a great and noble edifice ?—then let your first care " be the solid foundation of humility ;" says that illustrious Doctor of the Church. The grace of God had accomplished all this in the souls of those who formed the Community of Ste. Pélagie. For

over a year, they had given up their worldly attire; having long before renounced the spirit and maxims of the world. And now, not only were they clad in the religious habit, but, better far, their souls were adorned with the virtues and interior dispositions of which it is the emblem.



CHAPTER VI

Profession and Religious Life.

Dominus pars hæreditatis meæ. (Ps. xv. 5.) . . . *et hæreditas mea super mel et favum.* (Eccl. xxiv. 27.)
The Lord is the portion of my inheritance. . . and my inheritance is sweet above honey and the honey-comb.

ISHOP Bourget now felt that the time had at last come to execute the project he had for so long cherished, of erecting into a regular congregation the Community created and fostered by his care and under his patronage. He came to the Hospital on November 1st, 1847, and inaugurated a thirty days' retreat, in order to decide, by the light of recollection and prayer, who where those that should be admitted to religious profession. It would be difficult to describe the joy of all when they heard this welcome news.

The day had at last come, when their most ardent

aspirations would be realized, when they were to give themselves up wholly and unreservedly to the Divine Spouse of souls; when they would bind themselves to Him by that "triple tie" which in the words of Holy Scripture, "cannot be broken," by those "glorious chains" the religious vows, and this not only for a day, or a year, but forever! What a beautiful dream! Or rather what a precious reality! We can easily understand, therefore, with what fervor and what transports of joy the retreat was begun by all. It went on amidst the every day occupations of the Community; but more time was given to meditation, every effort made to preserve recollection, and the chaplain's impressive and heart-stirring appeals opened their souls to the effusions of divine grace. As often as he could, during the retreat, that is to say, in the brief intervals left by his many pressing duties, the Bishop failed not to visit his dear daughters. At such times he spoke to them of God; of their duties; of the spirit of their vocation; of the honor which it had pleased Divine Providence to confer upon them; of the increase of humility and self-denial by which they should strive to make return for these benefits; then he would confer with Madame Jetté on details respecting the government of the future Community.

What name would they give this new Order?

His Lordship decided to call it: "La Miséricorde" and that the religious were to take the name of "Sœurs de Miséricorde." "This name," says the Episcopal Mandate instituting the Order, "tells "you all that you must be in your new state; and "it is of itself alone a full indication of the line of "important duties you have to fulfill." The Bishop fixed the 16th of January of the coming year, the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus,—as the date for the canonical erection of the Community. What were the motives of that choice? The pious Bishop tells us himself in his Pastoral Letter in these words: "Remember well, that it is on the solemn day con- "secrated and devoted to honoring the Holy Name "of Jesus that the Church confers on you a glorious "title. Now, since Our Lord, in order to merit "the sweet name of Jesus, has deigned through an "excess of mercy, to sacrifice Himself in order to "save sinners,—so must you, in order to become "true Sisters of Mercy, devote yourselves generously "to the work of saving the greatest of sinners."

It was then decided that only the eight older novices should be admitted to pronounce their vows. —We give their names in the order in which they were admitted: Marie Rosalie Jetté, the foundress; Sophie Raymond, Lucie Benoît, Lucie Lecourtois, Marguerite Gagnon, Josephte Galipeau, Justine Filion and Adelaïde Lauzon.

Having entered the novitiate later than the others, Sophie Bibeau, notwithstanding her most ardent desires, had to wait until later for the happiness of being received among the Spouses of Jesus-Christ. She was appointed, with two postulants, to take charge of the penitents and do the daily work of the house; in a word, she was to fill the part of Martha, while her sisters, taking "the better "part," left aside all worldly occupations in order to listen, like Mary, to the voice of God and prepare themselves, by an eight days' retreat, to pronounce their holy vows. As she was skillful at sewing, she was chosen to make the habits of those who were about to be professed.

This habit was none other than the one the novices already wore, but completed and embellished by the emblems proper to religious. The black dress and cape were retained, with the addition of the stomacher and the band of white linen; a black veil fastened on the head, fell on either side and covered the shoulders; encircling the waist was a black cord with tassels of the same color; lastly the cross with the monogram of the name of Jesus, the espousal ring, and the beads,—the emblem of filial confidence in Mary,—completed the costume.

While these outward garments were being prepared, the grace of God fell more abundantly on

their souls, and imbued them with the sentiments and virtues of that "new man, who according to "God, is created in justice and holiness of truth (1)," of whom the Apostle speaks, and who is none other than Jesus-Christ himself, as he shows elsewhere (2); a garment whiter than snow, more resplendant than the sun; a garment of honor and glory, such as it becometh the King of heaven to bestow on His beloved Spouses on the day of their blessed union.

The day so long desired dawned at last; that 16th of January, 1848, which must henceforth be surrounded with a halo of unequalled glory in the annals of the Sisters of Miséricorde. What deep gratitude filled the hearts of the happy novices when Madame Jetté, her voice trembling with emotion, awoke them at dawn of day with the invitation to bless the Lord: "*Benedicamus Domino!*" and with what transports of joy and thanksgiving did they not answer: "*Deo gratias!*" Each and everyone of them might then appropriate to herself these words of the Holy Ghost: "This is the "Lord's doing, and it is wonderful in our eyes. "This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us "be glad and rejoice in it (3)."

(1) EPHE. IV. 24.
(2) ROM. XIII. 14.
(3) PS. CXVII. 23-24.

Bright and early the chaplain was at his post. The Chapel and the Community-room had been prepared and decorated with the utmost care. His Lordship himself, accompanied by some of the priests of his household, soon appeared and while the Bishop was being arrayed in his pontifical garments, the novices were assembled in the Community-room in deep emotion, silence and recollection, preparing to enter the Chapel when all at once, in accents at once joyous and grave the venerable chaplain intoned the anthem : " *Prudentes Vir-* " *gines ;* " " Prudent Virgins, prepare your lamps, " the Spouse is coming, go forth to meet Him ;" a touching and appropriate invitation to the spiritual nuptials about to be celebrated. The novices answered by singing the 121st Psalm, which expresses so admirably the sentiments of the Jewish pilgrims at the sight of the Holy City : " I was glad at the things " that were said unto me : We will go into the house " of the Lord. Our feet were standing in Thy courts, " O Jerusalem." A moment later all were kneeling in the Chapel, and the Bishop began Holy Mass. After the gradual, the prelate, wearing the insignia of his office, took the seat prepared for him, the novices kneeling in a semicircle at his feet; the following dialogue then took place. " My daughters, what do you ask for? My Lord,

" we ask for the grace of consecrating ourselves " entirely to Jesus-Christ, by making the three " vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, in this " Holy Congregation of the Sisters of Miséricorde." The Bishop then asked in grave and solemn accents, whether they had seriously reflected on the " sublimity of the union " they desired to contract, and after having heard their answer, recalled to their minds what virtues they must practise, and what obligations they must fulfill, if they would remain faithful to their vocation.—" However weak " we may be," answered the novices, " we rely so " firmly on the infinite mercies of God, that we hope " always to walk in His divine presence and never " lose His holy fear, which will be our safeguard " amidst the dangers of this world."

His Lordship then interrupted the ceremonies to address these valiant women, in an allocution wherein he gave full scope and expression to the sentiments of a heart inflamed with the love of God and zeal for souls. Then filled with anxiety and seemingly disturbed at the thought of the long train of crosses and sacrifices involved in their undertaking, if they were resolved to be faithful to their engagements, and terrified, morover, on account of human weakness, he questioned them a last time saying : " My daughters, do you still persist in your

" request?" With a firm voice all answered: " Yes, " My Lord, we are resolved to persevere." Reassured by this answer the Bishop tells them to accomplish their sacrifice, saying: " Since you persist in your " good resolutions, my daughters, accomplish now " what you have resolved upon." After a moment of silence each novice, in her turn, then pronounced aloud, in due form, the sacred vows which united her forever to the Divine Spouse.

The Community of the Sisters of Miséricorde was founded. Heaven seemed to have opened its portals and filled this humble Chapel with rays of glory from above, or rather to have shed upon it the abundant dew of benediction and joy which casts the Saints into ineffable transports of delight.

We will not try to describe the sentiments which filled to overflowing the hearts of the new Sisters at the close of the ceremony. All their past sufferings vanished amidst the joy of being united to God forever; they were blotted out from memory or remembered only to increase the happiness of the present. Bishop Bourget, his soul at peace, his face radiant with a sweet light, gave thanks to God, from the bottom of his heart, for having so graciously heard and answered his prayers, blessed his daughters most tenderly, and wished them a prosperous future.

All but one of the witnesses of that memorable scene have now passed away. The sole survivor was at the time a young ecclesiastic ; he is now a venerable old man, whose head has grown gray under the rudest labors, and in the eyes of all who know his history, his white locks are radiant with the halo of a half century's apostleship in the Canadian North-West, and his memory is blessed throughout the Church in Canada. He bears the honored name of " Père Lacombe." Let us hear him, fifty years later, describe in a letter the impressions of those days of the seed-time. He writes : " Invited by the Bishop to accompany him, " I was far from anticipating or imagining the scene " that I was to witness. How amazed then was I " on entering that humble room, which was your " first Chapel, to see a group of women in religious " habits, kneeling before the altar. I learned from " the Bishop's sermon that I was in presence of the " heroic band who founded the Community of the " Sisters of Miséricorde.

" How can I give you an idea of the eloquence of " the holy Bishop on that day ! The deep sense of " conviction with which he spoke ! Like a prophet " unveiling the future he foretold to these valiant " women all the trials awaiting them. After all " the years that have passed, I can still hear him

" telling them, in a voice trembling with emotion, of " all the courage, devotedness and self-sacrifice " they would need in order to bear up under the " world's mockery. ' They will call you fools, but " remember that your divine Master was first " treated thus and that He conquered the world by " the folly of His Cross.'

" For my part," continues the venerable missionary; " in my simplicity and ignorance of the " things of God, I said to myself: ' What audacity ! " and yet what courage ! ' ' You will be subject to " many contradictions,' continued the Bishop, ' you " will undergo many trials, you will have to bear " many insults before you accomplish such a mir- " acle ! ' ' It is tempting Providence ' people will " say..... Meantime I prayed for these brave " women and I thought to myself; ' Does not God " sometimes make use of means apparently sense- " less in the eyes of men, to operate the greatest " wonders ? These devoted foundresses,—their act " of consecration in hand, in the presence of Our " Lord in His Holy Sacrament, before their Bishop " and the Rev. M. Pilon, their protector and guide " in the religious life, and lastly under the eyes of a " future missionary to the western wilds, pronounced " their solemn vows. During all this time, the busy " life and strife of the city had not been interrupted

" for a moment; this little spot seemed forgotten
" amidst its unceasing turmoil; but it was far
" otherwise with the heavenly city; its portals
" opened wide to this declaration, or rather this
" proclamation, which endowed Montreal with a
" new Community. The divine contract was signed
" and accepted by heaven and earth, and the
" Church had produced another religious family."

If the world ignored the sublime act of these privileged souls, the Church contemplated it and applauded it with joy. Bishop Bourget resolved to consecrate this 16th of January, 1848, by a solemn and authentic document which would perpetuate forever the remembrance of this first profession. To that end, His Lordship addressed to the Community an Episcopal Letter replete with counsels of wisdom and considerations derived from faith, imbued throughout with the spirit of paternal charity. Then after having set forth and clearly defined the end for which the Institution was founded, he dwelt on the beauty and grandeur of this undertaking which, in some sort, he declared, will cause those consecrated to it to participate in the exercise of God's mercies towards sinners. The very name they were henceforth to bear, he said, would unceasingly recall this to their minds; and if, in order to exercise worthily this ministry of com-

passion, condescension, and goodness, they had many times, and perhaps, every day, to trample under foot their natural feelings of repugnance, they should remember that all the graces and strength necessary to enable them to accomplish their task were to be found in the Cross they wore. "Every morning," said His Lordship, "when arming yourselves with "this cross, you will press to your lips with respect "and affection the image of your Jesus,—the image "that will remind you that there is no other name "under Heaven whereby we can be saved than the "holy name of Jesus; that this same Jesus was during "his life the friend of sinners; that He was pleased "to visit them and sit at table and eat with them; "that He scorned the taunts and carpings of the "proud Pharisees; that Jesus performed a long "and weary journey to Samaria to convert a single "sinner,—an adulteress; that He allowed Magde- "lene, the sinner, to remain at His feet and dismissed "her only after having pardoned her her many sins.

"Each time that you look at this cross, hanging "from your neck, you will hear an interior voice "saying to you in the eloquent words of Holy "Scripture: 'Thus hath God loved men.' From "the life-giving cross that henceforth you will never "lay aside, will unceasingly emanate a salutary "virtue that will inflame you with zeal for the

" salvation of souls. At the sight of this cross you " will weep and mourn over the many scandals " which prevail everywhere and which sent Jesus to " Calvary. Jesus will say to you night and day, " from the cross: 'If you will come after me, deny " yourself, take up your cross and follow me.' Surely " this will be for you a most eloquent invitation to " bear with courage on every occasion the trials of " the religious life. Animated with these sen- " timents you will say to yourselves unceasingly: " ' We can never do enough for Jesus, who has " done so much for us.' "

The love of the Cross,—the love of Jesus cannot exist without a filial devotion towards Mary; and the Bishop ends his letter by exhorting his daughters to practise the most tender piety towards the Blessed Virgin.

In pronouncing their vows the Sisters had given themselves entirely to God, and in order that they might belong to Him alone, they had renounced the world, its trappings, its spirit and its false goods; and in order to annihilate, so to speak, the remembrance of the rank and position they once occupied in the world, they had given up their family name and adopted a religious one. Madame Jetté selected that of Sœur de la Nativité, doubtless because she had presided over the birth of the

Community; Madame Raymond was named Sœur St. Jean Chrysostôme; Lucie Benoît, Sœur Ste. Béatrix; Lucie Lecourtois, Sœur Marie des Sept Douleurs; Madame Galipeau became Sœur Ste. Jeanne de Chantal; Justine Filion, Sœur St. Joseph; Marguerite Gagnon, Sœur St. François de Sales; and Adelaïde Lauzon, Sœur Ste. Marie d'Egypte.

On the day after the profession the election to the various offices of the Community was held. His Lordship himself presided on the occasion. The title of Superior seemed to belong by right to Sister de la Nativité, she being the foundress of the institution. And without doubt she would have been unanimously elected had she not, through her lowly opinion of her own worth, and her dread of the bare idea of being elected, judged herself incapable of governing a community, and begged the Bishop to have pity on her weakness and not to impose her so heavy a charge. The Bishop tried to allay her fears; but it was all in vain, he had to yield to her persistent humility, and Mother de la Nativité congratulated herself and was much rejoiced at being able to follow her leaning for the hidden life.

Sister St. Jeanne de Chantal was elected Superior; the position of Assistant was given to Sister St. François de Sales; that of Mistress of Novices to

Sr Sainte-Beatrix
Sr M. des Sept Douleurs
Sr Ste-Jeanne de Chantal
Sr Saint-Joseph
Sr Ste-Marie d'Egypte

Sister Marie des Sept Douleurs; Sister St. Joseph became Treasurer; Sister St. Jean Chrysostôme, Mistress of the Maternity; Sister St. Marie d'Egypte, Mistress of Penitents; while Mother de la Nativité and Sister St. Beatrix were named Councillors.

Mother Ste. Jeanne de Chantal governed the Community during fifteen years. Of an imposing personal appearance, and a firm and straightforward character in all her dealings, she showed sound judgment and keen insight in managing temporal affairs, and great skill in the art of judging of men and things; such were the qualities of the new Superior, who was to do so much towards the development and prosperity of the work which Divine Providence intrusted to her care. If she fell short in any one point (and who can blame her for it?) it was in the difficult art of directing and forming souls to a religious life. Pious and full of charity, but having herself received but an imperfect training, and that at an age when habits have become a second nature; little instructed in the ways of religious perfection and withal deeply absorbed in the management of temporal matters, can we wonder that she was of herself unequal to the task of training her Sisters to the great virtues of the spiritual life? Happily God had provided for their

needs by giving them Rev. Mr. Pilon for spiritual director. The devotedness of this good priest was boundless and unfailing ; but his health began to fail, and now and then he was compelled to absent himself for a few days ; but the disease gained a footing and he had to take frequent journeys which sometimes seemed very long to the Community.

Meantime, the priests of the Cathedral did all they could to provide for the spiritual needs of the Sisters. Time and again at this period, did Bishop Bourget himself come to the house, either to say Holy Mass or give religious instructions. He often took possession of the small room provided for the chaplain and spent the day in the house. He was then at the disposal of any of the Sisters who desired to see and converse with him. At times, he resorted to the house, which was only a short distance away from his own residence, in order to escape from visitors and devote himself to some pressing work, without fear of being disturbed. The good Shepherd always visited the penitents first and was in truth to them what he strove to be, a living image of our Saviour. These poor souls were ever deeply moved by his great charity and did their best to respond to it by their piety and docility. Often did the charitable pastor come himself to administer the last sacraments to penitents in danger of death.

By his gentleness and his consoling words he calmed the fears awakened in their souls by the remembrance of a deplorable past ; by representing to them the infinite mercies of God, their confidence was restored, and deeply penitent for their faults, they breathed their last in the bosom of their Saviour.—" My child," said he to a dying penitent, " you will see Our Lord in a few moments ; take " your sins in one hand and in the other your " crucifix, and say to Him : " O my Saviour, " here are my sins and there is Thy mercy ; " Thou canst not refuse to forgive my sins, since " Thou hast shed all Thy blood to efface them." Having beside them a counseller capable of inspiring such sentiments, how could these poor girls fail to be reassured and die in peace ! Some, however, were found to be so hardened in vice as to resist even in the face of his great charity. The heart of the good Pastor was then a prey to the most cruel anguish, and he shed tears in abundance. Such instances, let us hasten to say, were very rare ; and as a rule the Sisters had the consolation of seeing them die in the peace of God.

At this period, the Sisters themselves treated and took care of the sick. Doctor Trudel (1), the

(1) In the beginning of the year 1850, following the advice of Doctor Trudel, towards whom the Sisters had reasons to be grateful, and having obtained the consent of the Bishop, the doors of the Maternity were opened

first physician employed in the establishment, gave them free lessons. The Sisters also attended sick women in their own homes. They had calls at every hour of the day and night. This continued until 1862, when certain medical men having raised objections, the Bishop advised the Sisters to abandon this outside work, though he did not absolutely forbid the practice.

But, four years later, the Holy See itself intervened, and prohibited the attendance of the Sisters on such cases. By way of a set-off for this, Bishop Bourget charged them with the duty of visiting the women's prison, and of attending to the spiritual welfare of the prisoners. The Sisters discharged this ministry for several years, until the day when their ever increasing labors in the Community obliged them to remain at home.

The number of penitents had not ceased to increase since the foundation. In 1848, their number reached eighty-seven and while in the two following years it was a little lower, in 1851 it increased to ninety-seven. The births were also proportioned to that number. During the first six years the Institution served as a refuge to 436 penitents, procured the grace of Baptism, and perhaps

to medical students that they might more easily initiate themselves to the practice of their profession. Special regulations were then adopted and strictly enforced with a view to obviate any possible dispute or difficulty.

also saved the life of 390 new-born infants. These figures alone are a sufficient eulogy of the Community and enable us to appreciate the extent of its services to families and to society.

It was becoming evident that the house on St. Catherine Street would soon be too small, and the Sisters began to consider by what means they might procure themselves a well-situated site, appropriate for a definitive foundation. Divine Providence, ever attentive to the wants of its children and faithful in following up its designs, was soon to show them the place chosen for the Mother-house of "La Miséricorde," and towards the end of 1851, they were to be in a position to establish their dwelling there.

Previous to that date, Sister St. François de Sales, one of those professed on the 16th of January, 1848, had left the Community. Discouraged on account of certain trials to which she had been subjected in view of a somewhat stiff and haughty character, she asked to be released from her vows. Her request was granted by the Bishop. A short time afterwards she returned and begged the Superior to receive her again into the Community; but the rule then and ever since enforced was not to accept anew any religious who shall have left the institution.

CHAPTER VII

The present Mother-House (1851).

Sint oculi tui aperti super hanc domum die ac nocte. (3 Reg. viii. 29.)
Let Thine eyes, O Lord, be upon this house day and night.

IT was barely six years since the day when Madame Jetté, alone and without other resource than her own stout heart and a firm confidence in God's help, had opened the refuge on St. Simon Street, and lo the grain of mustard seed had become a tree, young indeed, but of sturdy growth and full of promise for the future, As a growing child casts aside, from year to year. the garments it has outgrown, so, in its progressive development, the Institution had migrated successively from the garret in which it first saw the light to the larger houses on Wolfe Street and on St. Catherine Street. These were but temporary

installations. A permanent and lasting abode was soon to be found. It had become a necessity. The Community had been tried in every possible manner and stood the test without flinching. There was good reason, humanly speaking, for thinking that it would live and in fact assume larger proportions. The public had, to some extent, conquered its aversion and began to see the great utility of such an institution. It was manifest, from the daily increasing number of unfortunate creatures who sought a refuge in the house, that divine Providence had blessed the new undertaking. The advisability of extending the work of the Community was a thing upon which opinions might differ, but was it right or possible to refrain from relieving the miseries of the every day increasing number of victims of vice? The question was answered in the negative, and Bishop Bourget and the friends of the house, and notably Olivier Berthelet, decided to secure a site for the building of an establishment suited to the object and special needs of the Community. An excellent opportunity soon presented itself. Close by, towards the river, lay a piece of land, well located, large enough for present needs and with adjoining land available for future needs. The property was sold by auction, and purchased by Mr. Berthelet, on behalf of the Bishop, for two

thousand five hundred dollars. It faced Dorchester Street on the North, Lagauchetière Street on the South and Campeau Street on the East; on the West side it adjoined sundry small private properties, which could be purchased, from time to time, so as to enable the Community, when the requirements of the institution rendered it necessary, to extend their limits as far as St. Hubert Street, parallel to Campeau Street.

On the property purchased stood two houses. One of them, designated in the Annals as "*la maison de brique*," stood at the angle formed by Campeau and Lagauchetière Streets. It was the larger and more convenient of the two, and was to be the home of the Community for a time. Repaired, whitewashed and adorned with a verandah or "gallery," this house afterwards became the residence of the chaplain.—The second building, which was a more unpretending structure, and was called "*la maison grise*," stood on Campeau Street, some distance from the other. It was used for a time as a wash-house and afterwards taken down to make room for larger buildings.

No sooner had the purchase been effected than Mother de Chantal put forth every effort to prepare the buildings for the reception of the Community as rapidly as possible. The work of repairing lasted

until the end of November. And early in December the "*maison grise*" was occupied by the penitents and the brick building by the Sisters. The latter suffered much from the dampness of the rooms. The plaster was not dry, and the heat of the stoves did not suffice to overcome or obviate completely the evil effects as regards the health of the inmates. But no one complained. They well knew that suffering ever accompanies the beginnings of all works undertaken for God ; and souls truly detached from the world are never happier herebelow than when they have to endure pain or inconvenience. Moreover, even in the new quarters there was overcrowding, and the novices who lived in those heroic days remember, with that specially intense joy which clings to the memory of trials nobly endured, the close and cramped dormitories located over the bakeries and stables and the rough hard beds on which they slept for many a year.

The year 1852 brought no change whatever in this state of things. But the Superior was considering as to the means of enlarging the buildings already existing. The number of penitents was increasing every day : to let things remain as they were would be to reduce themselves to the sad necessity of closing their doors to many unhappy creatures.

Mother de Chantal was busy with this problem when the memorable conflagration of July 8th destroyed eighteen hundred houses and reduced to shelterless penury over nine thousand persons. The Cathedral and Bishops' residence were destroyed. The Sisters were for a time anxious as to the fate of their own house. It was in imminent danger. The fire caught and was extinguished twice. While the vast, whirling body of flame, driven by a tempest of wind lapped up the adjoining houses, and burning brands fell in showers, on their roof and in the garden, the Sisters quickly carried some of their effects to a place of safety and buried the rest underground. The fiery element spared their buildings, however. Their house remained unscathed when the storm of flame had done its worst, and the Sisters were able to return to their Chapel which they thought they were never to see again, there to return heartfelt thanks to divine Providence for the escape of the institution.

This catastrophe compelled the Mother Superior to put off for the following year the carrying out of her plans for new buildings. So soon as the season was sufficiently advanced work was, however, begun on the building which now stands between the Chapel and the wing on Campeau Street. Its dimensions were sixty-five feet in length by fifty-five

in width, thus affording to the Community a larger amount of space than any building they had as yet occupied.

Sister St. Jean Chrysostome never entered the new quarters. Exhausted by her labors and sacrifices, she was drawing near the end of her career. The illness which brought her to the grave made manifest to all her admirable strength of soul. Unable to stand, she never remained unoccupied even when in bed, and, up to her last day on earth, gave an example of courage and industry. She might well say, as she gave up her soul to her Lord and Master: "I have finished my course, I have "kept the faith, there remains for me now but to "receive the crown which will be granted me by a "just Judge." She was buried in the garden until such time as a vault was prepared for her remains in the Chapel basement.

The institution was still located in the "*maison* "*de brique*," when Rev. M. Truteau, Vicar General of the diocese was appointed ecclesiastical superior of the Community. His many occupations elsewhere rendered it impossible to follow up as closely as was needed and as he would have wished the work placed under his care. He loved it, nevertheless, and held it in high esteem, and whenever any distinguished strangers visited the palace, the

Superior never failed to bring them to the humble house of Miséricorde. Thus it happened that Mgr. Bedini, Nuncio to Brazil, was received as a guest by the Community. That distinguished and most amiable prelate, when the Superior begged him to make allowance for the poverty of the institution smilingly replied : " Dear Mother, it is just because " you are poor that I am glad to visit you."

Meantime the buildings begun the previous year had been completed. In the month of October, 1854, the Sisters took up their abode in their new quarters. During the first few weeks they suffered somewhat from damp and cold, but the improvement resulting from the increased accommodation in the size and number of rooms, and the distribution of the various offices of the household was more than sufficient to compensate them for any temporary suffering or discomfort. Their hearts must indeed have been grateful for the steady growth and development of their institution, manifested by the successive enlargements of their buildings.

Mother Nativité, in particular, saw with heartfelt delight, the designs of Providence in her regard unfold themselves, day by day, with an unfailing fidelity which confounded her humility. But yesterday, full of faith and trust in Providence and in the words of her Bishop, she had rushed blindfolded

into a path from which there seemed to be no issue, a life of devotedness, of poverty and of sacrifice; and to-day the light was shining, the tree which had been planted amid the darkness had grown up, and become strong and was destined to live. Hence did the humble foundress feel the need of humbling herself, of hiding herself, of annihilating herself. Another held the title of Superior, and passed, in the eyes of the public, for the foundress of an order whose usefulness was at last admitted by all; this moved her but little; and while others were concerned at it in the interest of truth, she would gladly have applied to herself the words of St. John the Baptist in relation to Our Lord: "He must "grow; as for me, I must diminish and grow less "and disappear." And in very truth did she disappear, as we shall soon see, under the veil daily growing thicker and more dense, of humiliations and of sufferings, in which it pleased God to enfold her in order to sanctify her life, augment her merits and prepare her soul to enjoy the pure delights of our heavenly country.

The buildings which had hitherto sheltered the Community were not at once completely abandoned. They continued to be used for several years longer by the novices or the penitents. The "*maison grise*" was used for boarders, some of whom made gen-

erous gifts to the Community. In the straightened circumstances of the institution this aid was most acceptable. In order to increase the revenue of the Community, the Sisters devoted their spare time to doing needle work for the city shops. The articles made consisted of men's clothing, linen and the like. This work was well paid for, and it would seem that the Sisters worked too hard at it, if we are to believe the record in the Annals, which tells us that it proved to be injurious to the health of the workers.

With the same object in view, the increase of the resources of the Community, Mother de Chantal bought a piece of land on the other side of Dorchester Street, opposite the Sisters' house. A dilapidated building stood on this piece of ground. It was repaired at great expense with a view to keeping boarders. The name of Ste. Françoise Romaine was given to the new institution, but the undertaking was not a success. After five years of persevering trial it had to be given up.

Meantime the city having at last overcome its prejudice, began to take an interest in the institution. On several occasions money grants were made by the corporation, and about this time a large building on Campeau Street opposite the Community garden was conveyed to the Miséricorde for a term of a

few years. The building is still standing but in a ruinous condition. It was three stories high, and its high-pitched roof rising in pyramid form and especially its square, massive and unadorned frame denote its ancient origin. After extensive repairs had been effected the Maternity was installed in this building. Its vast, airy and well-lit rooms were a great improvement on the accommodation hitherto available for the inmates; and no doubt the penitents would have been most suitably domiciled therein but for the close proximity of the street. The ordinary noises from the street were nothing, for it was not much frequented; but, too often, it was supplemented by shouts which had a special meaning, an organized tumult, an indescribable charivari. Sometimes it was necessary to cross the street in order to attend the offices of the Community, and then to gratify an indiscreet, morbid and foul curiosity, two rows of men with sardonic and impudent looks and uttering low and sarcastic taunts, would gather close up on either side of the hapless penitents. With their faces hidden under a coarse brown veil, and their shoulders covered by a red cape, the unfortunates endured without a word of complaint the shower of taunts and winks and foul epithets. Many a scene of this kind was witnessed during the four years of the occupancy of the "Corporation Building."

Happily this part of the Community had been placed under the spiritual care of a chaplain, a priest of venerable character filled with the spirit of God, whose fervent exhortations aroused the courage of the defenceless inmates, fostered piety and good-will amongst them and urged them on to the practice of every christian virtue. To a sincere and prudent zeal, M. Villeneuve (1) joined a heart filled with boundless compassion. Hence it was that at this period he was given charge of all undertakings which nobody but himself wanted to take in hand. He poured out upon them the treasures of his charity and devotedness, both in spiritual and in temporal matters. He had been one of the first to befriend the Community, and he remained its friend to the last. For four years he faithfully administered to the spiritual needs of the penitents. His wisdom and, above all, his condescension and his fervor worked wonderful transformations in these poor souls. Many of them

(1) Léonard Vincent Léon Villeneuve, or de Villeneuve (1808-1873), was born at Tulles in France, became a priest of St. Sulpice in 1830 and came to Canada in 1838. Was eight years Director of the " Collège de Montréal " and subsequently held sundry most important positions in the Company. He was in all difficult matters the right hand man of M. Billaudèle, then the Superior of the house. Being skilled in architecture he designed and built the Churches of St. Anne, St. Jacques and Notre-Dame de Grâces. Deeply versed in the sciences he was president of several learned societies. He was taken suddenly ill when returning from the Hotel-Dieu and entered the refuge for the poor on St. Urbain Street, where he received the last sacraments. Thus he ended his life while engaged in one of those works of charity to which it had ever been devoted.

formed the desire of leaving the world and remaining forever hidden from its eyes in the Community which had opened its doors to shelter them. Thus originated within the Order, a legion apart, wholly composed of former penitents:—the Magdalenes, of whom we shall have something to say later on.

At the close of the year 1858 the Community numbered twenty-four Sisters. Its services to society were now evident to all. The yearly number of penitents had reached one hundred and thirty; a year or two afterwards it was to reach one hundred and sixty and before many years, two hundred. In view of this development of an institution whose usefulness he felt to be so great, Bishop Bourget felt the necessity of looking for himself more closely into the affairs, the spirit and regularity of the Community. He came, therefore, into the midst of his spiritual daughters, conversed at length with each one of them, and enquired into every thing. His fatherly and pastoral eye scanned their souls and the exterior conduct and management of the house. He compassionated with every grief and sorrow and shared in all their sufferings; but he stood firm in face of all abuses, watchful and vigilant where he saw negligence, and eager for good; he insisted on the exact observance of the rule, encouraged all in the generous practice of the reli-

gious virtues, of mutual forbearance, of silence, the safeguard of the life of a community, of abnegation and self-sacrifice. Of a certainty the Sisters had practised these great virtues, joyfully and lovingly ; but we all know that habit benumbs the best possible dispositions and relaxes the will the most energetic ; happily we also know that there is no more effectual agent for inspiring fresh courage and energy than the word of one clothed with authority from on high.

His Lordship, of his own motion held a new election. He took this course in view of the small number of Sisters in the Community. Besides, no rules had been adopted to settle the mode of carrying out elections. But it was now decided that for the future the elections should be conducted as in other communities. Mother de Chantal was retained in her position. She had as Superior done much for the Community. Her talent for business was well known outside, and the public looked upon her as the foundress of the Sœurs de Miséricorde. It may be also that a certain number of the Sisters, who had not witnessed the inception of the Order, and in whose eyes Sister Nativité, so humble, so retiring, besides being sickly and aged, seemed a very ordinary person, or rather a person hardly to be noticed at all,—it may be that some of the Sisters,

then were led to give to the Superior a title which the latter did not take the trouble to decline. In order to dispose of the legend which seemed to be about to usurp the place of truth, Bishop Bourget declared, in presence of the assembled Community, that the title of foundress devolved of right on the person who had begun the work, and hence it belonged exclusively to Mother Nativité. "You "shall all," he added, "for the future give her the "name of Mother ; it is the only suitable name for "her." He also decided that the foundress was to rank next after the Superior, and that the Sisters might in fullest confidence seek her counsel and advice.

The good Bishop then revised, modified and perfected the rules as he deemed necessary, and exhorted all the Sisters to edify one another mutually by giving an example of that regularity which is the mainspring of a religious community. Knowing well how much instruction and good reading help to sustain piety in the soul, he caused all the books scattered throughout the house to be gathered together to form the nucleus of a library, which was destined to increase from year to year.

But the pressing need of enlarging the building began to assert itself. It could not be hoped that the "Corporation building" would be left much

longer at the disposal of the Community. Besides the annoyances connected with it had long been a source of suffering to the inmates and every one in the institution. But how was it possible for the Sisters, in their utter poverty, to think of building? Would it be wise to take upon themselves the burden of a heavy debt? True, His Lordship had given them permission to go through the parishes of the diocese to solicit aid from the charity of the faithful; and equally true that the generosity of the catholic people was beyond all praise, and manifested itself in every possible way, in their eagerness to help the many religious and charitable works attracted from elsewhere or set on foot through the zeal of Bishop Bourget. But would it be prudent, in view of this vast number of new undertakings appealing for aid, to go on with their undertaking, relying on human charity whose resources are of necessity limited? These questions, pregnant with doubt and anxiety, were pressing heavily upon the mind of Mother de Chantal, when Olivier Berthelet, crowned his many acts of liberality towards the Community by offering to construct at his own expense the buildings required.

In the summer of 1859 ground was broken, on an extension of the building occupied by the Sisters, for the foundations of a new edifice of like dimen-

MOTHER HOUSE, DORCHESTER STREET, MONTREAL.

sions. Between the two was to stand the Chapel, with its entrance facing Dorchester Street. It was begun the same year. In spite of all the energy and activity displayed, the building was not finished when winter set in. Early in the following year work was resumed ; and on the 30th June, Bishop Bourget, surrounded by many of his clergy, solemnly blessed the new buildings, which were not occupied until the autumn.

The penitents removed to their new quarters on the 12th October. Mr. Berthelet himself put them in possession. His charitable heart was filled with joy at being the means of furnishing the poor creatures with a suitable refuge. He took part in the work of removal to the new home. When he saw the wretched furniture up to that time used by the penitents, his heart was moved to pity, and he gave orders for bedsteads, chairs, tables and other articles to meet every need of the household. " When he saw that anything was needed," says the Chronicle of the house, " his kindness of heart " overpowered him, and he had to give." Many a time was his generosity appealed to, and many a time did he himself forestall the wishes and needs of the Sisterhood !

Fifteen years elapsed without further enlargement of the buildings. However, provision was made to

that end, by the purchase, in 1862, of the remainder of the ground required in order to extend the Sisters' property to St. Hubert Street, with the exception of a strip, still occupied by private houses, on Dorchester Street. Before speaking of the successive additions made to the Mother-house, we have to record the important events, which occurred during these years and cast a shadow over the life of the Community or filled with joy the hearts of its members.

CHAPTER VIII

Death of Mother de la Nativité (1864).

Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors Sanctorum ejus. (Ps. CXV. 15.)
Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his Saints.

THE year 1860 ended in mourning and sorrow. On the last day of November in that year closed the earthly career of Canon Pilon, whose devotedness had been of such great service to the Community for fifteen years. His example, no less than his wise counsel and fervent exhortations, had helped to enkindle and maintain in the hearts of the Sisters a holy emulation in striving for the perfection of their calling. He was, moreover, in every sense of the word, a consoling angel. "You "felt," we read in a note, "when you approached "him, that there emanated from his person some- "thing of the goodness and charity of Our Saviour

" Himself." His love for the Blessed Virgin and his burning zeal for God's house, were among the traits of his character which most deeply impressed the Community. His death fell upon them like a bolt from heaven. Though often indisposed, he was young, and it was hard to realize that his end had already come.

The funeral service, which was celebrated in the new Chapel, was presided over by Bishop Bourget in the presence of a large number of clergymen, friends of the deceased and of the house. The body was interred in the basement, under the sanctuary, and to this day the mortal remains of the venerated chaplain lie resting beneath a special monument in the midst of those for whom he gave up his life.

He was succeeded by Canon Paré (1), who besides the title of chaplain held also that of ecclesiastical Superior, and subsequently became also the Director as to temporal matters. His great wisdom and his burning zeal bore much fruit. Besides the special and often hidden results of his ministry during the two years it lasted, the Community were indebted to him for many important modifications of the

(1) Joseph Octave Paré (1814-1878), a graduate of St. Hyacinth College, who also pursued his theological studies there. Being ordained in 1838, he spent the remainder of his lifetime at the Bishop's Palace in Montreal. Becoming Secretary and subsequently one of the Canons, he was instrumental in securing Rome's approval of the constitutions of the Montreal Chapter, and in procuring the requisite funds for the erection of the present Cathedral.

rules, modifications which were of value in that they brought the letter of the rule into closer conformity with the spirit of the Order.

Mother St. Jeanne de Chantal was a party to these modifications of the rule which the good of the Community required. It was one of the last acts of her administration, which was then nearing its end. Those fifteen years had been a period of development and in fact of prosperity, if we compare the condition of the house at the time when she first took charge with that in which she left it at the close of her administration. When Sister St. Jeanne de Chantal became Superior the work was in its infancy and barely able to stand on its feet; and now we find it well-formed and vigorous. The excellent worker could now rest from her labors and return to the obscurity of the common life of the Community; her name would henceforth be inscribed in letters of gold in the Annals of her Community.

Nevertheless it is only true to say that her government had become a burthen to the Sisters and for more than one reason. The firmness of her character, which was not always counterpoised by a corresponding mildness, had the effect in the long run, so closely did it simulate harshness, of warping the minds of even the least prejudiced members of

the Community. Negligence or even abuses, which are the natural consequences of human weakness, invariably creep in under cover of routine, or it may be of habits contracted, from which there seems to be no escape for those who remain too long in authority.

Mother St. Jeanne de Chantal's administration was no exception to the rule. Its long duration alone sufficed to make a change desirable. Besides, many of the religious longed for a superior, who, without neglecting temporal matters, would watch more closely over their spiritual interests and take more effectual means to infuse the spirit of the Order into the young recruits and maintain it in the professed. In short, notwithstanding her excellent qualities, Mother St. Jeanne de Chantal seemed to be no longer suited to govern the house in view of the period of development it had now entered upon. At the time when, with a view to secure aid, she had to bestir herself actively to make herself known, to mingle with outsiders and exert an influence over people in order to interest them in the work she had at heart, she seemed to be the providential person appointed to accomplish all this exterior work, a difficult task that no ordinary person could have accomplished ; a meritorious one if we only consider what self-denial, what mental energy

and unceasing activity, were required : it was a task full of perils also, on account of the tendency it might impart to the Community, and it is but just to acknowledge that the Superior throughout all this, was only animated by a sense of the necessity and the duty of opening up the way for the new-born organisation.

The Bishop presided over the elections which were the first held in accordance with the usual forms. Sister St. Joseph was elected Superior, while Sister St. Jeanne de Chantal became first Assistant. This new position was far from being to Sister St. Joseph's taste ; she accepted with a heavy heart the burden which the will of her Sisters, in her eyes the expression of the will of God,—imposed on her. Her feeble health was, moreover, hardly compatible with the duties of her office, and often did she have to rely on her Assistant for business matters.

It was during Mother St. Joseph's term of office that the venerable foundress gave up her beautiful soul to God, on April 5th, 1864. In pursuance of the plan adopted for this work our attention has been directed towards the exterior development of the Order of Miséricorde, and thus it happens that we have lost sight, for the time being, of the noble woman who was its life and soul from the very

beginning, and who beyond a doubt and in spite of all appearances to the contrary, continued to be its creative and vivifying principle before God. It is with religious communities as with the truly Christian soul: her eyes are fixed on the one hand upon the world in which she lives, and on the other upon heaven to which she eagerly aspires; she holds out one hand to her fellow mortals to draw them to God, with the other she takes firm hold of God Himself, the source of all light, life and strength. Among the members of a community, there are, it would seem, some who, by the very nature of their office and still more, by a special call from above, seem destined to fill a larger measure of either one or the other part.

While by a special vocation of divine Providence, Mother St. Jeanne de Chantal had been their guide in all earthly matters, by an equally providential disposition Mother de la Nativité had been the link which kept the work closely attached to God. Her life is almost completely hidden from the eyes of men. Occupied in performing humble duties, she buried herself in a blessed obscurity, where she found all that she loved: Jesus and Mary. There also she found humiliations and sufferings in every form,—the cross with all its anguish; but must not the grain of wheat fall to earth, disappear and be

dissolved in order that it may reappear, in due season renewed, multiplied and transfigured into the beautiful ear, fit to be caressed by the rays of the sun and the soft breath of the summer breeze. Is it not also a divine law that life springs from death, as light from darkness? Since Our Lord Jesus-Christ suffered and died, before He entered into His glory and recovered his heavenly kingdom, is it not a law amongst us, that we must undergo all the keen and poignant pangs of immolation in every part of our being, before we can hope to feast our eyes on the eternal splendors of heaven? And then, is it not from its fiery bed on the burning embers, that the incense exhales its most fragrant and penetrating perfume? For all these reasons suggested by faith and strikingly confirmed by our daily experience of the ways of divine Providence, Mother de la Nativité was subjected during the last years of her life, to numerous tribulations of body and soul. The five years which preceded her death were a long martyrdom. She spent them in the infirmary, or rather,—for there was no infirmary —confined in a poor cell, apart from the Community, where she often had to suffer the painful ordeal of solitude.

Sickness and infirmities without number afflicted her body, which she had never spared. Her feet

grew heavy and refused their services; dropsy of a painful and ominous kind appeared in all her members; an inveterate and almost unceasing cough had settled on her chest, causing frequent and distressing attacks of suffocation. The sufferings which followed these attacks were most severe and unremitting. But, far from complaining, the pious foundress humbled herself under the hand of God, and with resignation and even with thankfulness pressed her lips to the chalice of Gethsemani. "I "asked God to grant me sufferings here below, "and spare me the torments of purgatory," she one day said confidentially to the Sister-infirmarian, "and He has granted my prayer; blessed be His "holy Name!" At times her sufferings became intolerable, and then the poor invalid would raise her eyes and hands towards heaven, as though in mute prayer, and then lower them again and remain for long intervals recollected and as if absorbed in realizing and relishing at leisure the bitterness of her sacrifice, or perhaps in gathering up all her strength to meet the onslaught of suffering. "My "Saviour have mercy on me!" would she say at times, when the pains became too keen and violent: or: "O my Jesus, accept all!" When the paroxysm had passed away, the countenance of the poor sufferer at once recovered its usual expression of goodness and serenity.

At times she was left without proper attendance and nursing, for the Sisters were few in number and overwhelmed with work. In fact, as no one had been specially appointed to look after her wants, in the beginning of her illness it sometimes happened, by a special permission of Providence, that she spent an entire day without receiving any care or attention. Never did a word of complaint fall from the lips of the venerable forsaken one. She would then unite herself to Jesus abandoned in the garden of Olives and on the Cross, and full of confidence in Him who sustains here below those who are stricken down and sinking under sorrow, she took delight in suffering for His love. While she did not suffer from hunger, the food offered her was often unsuited to her failing appetite and her worn-out constitution. The doctor had ordered fresh eggs and certain rare and expensive delicacies, but the house was very poor; and who will ever know the many privations the venerable foundress had to endure? She bore everything with perfect cheerfulness. When the Sister in attendance expressed her sorrow at not being able to give her better food, she smilingly held out her crucifix and said: "Our Lord did not always have what was "necessary."

Much more painful to her heart so full of love for

God, were the spiritual privations she endured. Her little room was far from the Chapel, and she was thus deprived of the consolation of assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, and often even of confession and Holy Communion. Her soul then fell into an agony, but no complaint ever escaped her lips ; she resigned herself wholly to the ever adorable will of God and repeated, with the agonizing Saviour in the Garden : "Father, Thy will, not mine, be done."

Bishop Bourget visited her often during this long period of illness ; her sufferings and moral trials were such, that he hesitated not to declare to the assembled Sisters that "they would have been "too much for any one of less solid virtue than "that of their Mother."

In the spring of 1864, she grew suddenly worse, and fresh complications were feared. She had until then been able to sit in a chair by the window ; she was now compelled to take to her bed. The physicians declared that she was threatened with an attack of acute bronchitis, which there was but little hope of controlling, on account of her extreme weakness. The venerable Mother grew more feeble every day, her appetite completely disappeared, and the Sisters saw to their dismay, that the fatal disease had reached and sapped the inmost citadel of life.

Mother de la Nativité had lost none of her sweet

serenity. She smiled at the sight of Death, as on meeting a dear friend. What else had she desired on earth, if not to see and possess God for whom she had always lived? The thoughts of Heaven and eternity fascinated her soul with increasing power, in proportion as the bonds which still detained her in this land of exile, were severed by the hand of disease.

A priest from the Cathedral, while visiting her, asked her if she feared death? "Oh! no," she quickly replied, "for I have to do with a merciful "God." The Bishop found her in the same dispositions, and himself administered to her the last sacraments of the Church. The invalid received them with a lively faith. She already seemed standing on the shores of eternity, only awaiting permission from her Bishop and father to enter into the promised land. "My Lord," she said to him, "henceforth I am useless to the Community; permit "me to leave this valley of tears." "My daughter," answered the Bishop, "wait a while, God's time has "not yet come." He then announced to the Sisters that their venerable Mother, who edified them daily by her courage and cheerfulness under her harrowing trials, would remain with them sometime longer. This forecast was fulfilled. The disease took a milder form, and the patient was evidently better.

Ere long all immediate danger had seemingly disappeared.

But it was only in appearance. It was but a last effort of life against death, which was surely and mercilessly advancing, step by step. Forty days had elapsed since the Bishop administered the last rites of the Church to Mother de la Nativité, when a sudden return of the most alarming symptoms took away all hope of recovery. The end was fast drawing nigh. Rev. M. Huberdeau, Chaplain to the Community, again administered Extreme Unction to the sufferer and told her that her exile was nearly over. She was ready and the news filled her soul with raptures of joy. Well might she have said with the Psalmist: "I rejoice at the things that were "said to me: we will go into the house of the "Lord; soon my feet will be standing in thy "courts: O Jerusalem, city of my God."

Before parting from her Sisters, whom she so dearly loved, she called them all once more around her in order that she might bid them a last farewell and give them her supreme recommendations. "I "entreat you," she said, "for the love of God, to "strictly observe all the rules of this house, and "not to take as your model this unworthy servant of "Jesus-Christ who is about to leave you in order to "appear before the throne of the Almighty Judge.

" I carry with me the sweet hope of seeing you all " in heaven." After having asked their forgiveness for all the pain she might have caused them, she recommended herself to their pious prayers and gave them her last blessing. In the evening the Bishop came to see her and said : " My dear daughter, " now you may die in peace, and go to heaven to " receive the crown which God in his goodness has " prepared for you, as a reward for all the sacrifices " and good works you have accomplished for " His glory." He then asked her to watch over him from above, blessed her for the last time, saying that he hoped to meet her soon in heaven, and begged her to ask that grace for him.—" I will " do no such thing, my Lord," replied the dying Mother, " you are still necessary for the welfare of " the diocese ; and when God wills to call you, it " will be time enough."

In the meantime her death was rapidly drawing near, and her strength was visibly failing her. Her breath was getting short and broken. Kneeling around her bed, the Sisters were praying and awaiting the supreme moment in deep recollection. Towards two in the morning the venerable Mother slowly made the sign of the cross, and turning her eyes towards the Sisters, asked them to say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. After having joined

in these pious prayers, she said aloud: "O my "Jesus!" These were her last words. She had fallen asleep forever. She died thus without the slightest struggle or agony, and gave up her soul to God, on Tuesday, April 5th, 1864.

During that same night the inmates of the penitents' infirmary were suddenly awakened and saw an aged Sister, whose features were unknown to them, enter the room carrying a light in her hand and go around among them from bed to bed. After completing her rounds, she made her exit by a different door from that by which she had entered the room, but not until she had spoken to one of them, who was dangerously ill, and told her that she would soon recover. From the description given by the penitents, in the morning, the Sisters were inclined to think that God had permitted Mother de la Nativité to visit and console the poor penitents, whom she had so dearly loved during her life, but they were fully convinced of it by the speedy recovery of the sick penitent.

Bishop Bourget did honor to the pious foundress by himself presiding at her funeral service. A large number of priests and members of other religious communities were also present, to pay a last tribute of respect to the noble woman, whose earthly career had borne abundant fruit, because it had been wholly consecrated to God's service.

Before the last prayers, His Lordship, in a brief allocution, enumerated the many virtues of the venerable Mother. He spoke of the humble beginnings of her work, the daily sacrifices which she had been obliged to make, comparing her to the valiant woman of Holy Scriptures, and spoke more especially of the humble and hidden life, joyfully accepted, which had been her lot for the past few years, and which, before God, was perhaps her highest title to an eternal reward. Her remains were laid in the vault under the Chapel ; there she lies in the midst of her spiritual children, awaiting the great day of the Resurrection.

" Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of " the Saints " because it is the echo of their life. We have seen in looking over these pages what Mother de la Nativité's life was : humble, active, wholly given up to God, and sacrificed to the salvation of souls. From the day when she gave up the direction of her work in order to sanctify herself, far from human eyes, she almost disappears from this history. But inasmuch as the virtues she continued to practise and the example she thus gave, contributed to the founding of her Institute, quite as much as did her active work in the beginning, it is but just to cast a retrospective glance over this noble life, of which we have just seen the close, and gather up

for our edification, the crumbs fallen from that "perpetual feast" which a pure soul offers to her Creator. This we shall do at the close of this history.

Meantime, before going any further, let us note that the Community was composed, at that time, of twenty-three professed Sisters, eleven novices and postulants, and twenty-five Magdelenes and girls in the preservation class; also that nearly two thousand three hundred penitents, besides a large number of orphans, had found a refuge in the house founded by Mother de la Nativité, and we shall be able to form some idea of the singular blessings showered down by God on his servant's undertaking. If we call to mind, moreover, that our divine Saviour teaches us to "judge a tree by its fruits," this simple enumeration of human miseries succoured and relieved, and of virtuous souls led to sacrifice their liberty in the religious state, will be sufficient to show what treasures of piety and eminent virtue were hidden in the heart of the foundress of the Sisters of Miséricorde.

BOOK II

(1864-1898)

Development of the Work

UP TO THE END OF THE

FIRST HALF-CENTURY

VIRTUES OF THE FOUNDRESS

Benedixit eis et multiplicati sunt (Ps. CVI. 38).
And the Lord blessed them and they were multiplied exceedingly.

MOST REV. ÉDOUARD-CHARLES FABRE,

First Archbishop of Montreal.

CHAPTER Ist

Revision and Approbation of the Constitutions.

Quicumque hanc regulum secuti fuerint, pax super illos et misericordia (GAL. VI. 16).
And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them and mercy.

AT the hour of her death Mother de la Nativité had enjoyed one supreme consolation : the poor girls for whom she had worked and sacrificed herself unceasingly, throughout the last twenty years of her life, were not to be forsaken. An asylum was open to them in their misfortune, and in that asylum,—whose existence seemed now to be assured,—devoted, tender, self-sacrificing and charitable hearts would welcome their return to virtue. God, we may well suppose, gave her a glimpse of many generations of Sisters, animated by her spirit and her zeal and heirs of her virtues, extending and multiplying throughout time the

good work she had commenced. From the soil ploughed and seeded down with so much labor and watered so freely with the sweat of her brow and her tears, a promising harvest had already sprung up ; and like unto the laborer after his day's work is done, she could enter joyfully her eternal home, singing the praises of Him who had " done great things for her."

A short time after the death of the Foundress, Bishop Bourget, accompanied by the chaplain of the Community, M. Huberdeau (1), started for Rome. Doubtless the choice of his companion was made in view of the intention the Bishop had of submitting the Rule of the Order of Miséricorde to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He could not have made a better one.

Abbé Huberdeau was a priest of great learning, intelligence and energy, besides being perfectly conversant with the rules, traditions and spirit of the Community. After having examined the constitutions and the several rules of the Order, the Sacred Congregation indicated certain modifications in matters of detail and some amendments to be

(1) Huberdeau, Gédéon (1823-1887), born at Chambly, ordained in 1846, employed first at the Cathedral, afterwards charged with the parishes of St. André d'Argenteuil, St. Athanase, Chambly, St. Hubert, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Zotique, and the French Church in Albany, N.Y. In 1852, he founded a house of the Sisters of Providence in Chili. Died at Longue-Pointe in 1887,—buried at St. Thérèse.

made, and formulated notes on the constitution and rules. All this was communicated directly to the Community by the devoted chaplain himself, or made known indirectly, through the medium of Canon Hicks (1), who was then ecclesiastical Superior and Chaplain "*pro tempore.*"

On his return to Montreal, M. Huberdeau, still impressed with the observations he had heard made, at Rome, by the eminent persons appointed to examine the constitutions, resolved to go to work at once and fashion the Community in conformity with the ideal he had brought back with him. Two circumstances seemed to favor his plans; the Bishop's illness, and the election of a Superior who was young, and consequently timid and inexperienced.

The fatigue of his voyage joined to the incessant labors of his office, had been too much for Bishop Bourget; and, for a time, the state of his health prevented him from looking closely after the Community.—Mother Marie de la Miséricorde, the new Superior, was only twenty-eight years old. She was intelligent and full of energy, but in no

(1) Hicks, Etienne Hyppolite (1823-1889), born at St. Marie de la Beauce, studied at Nicolet College, ordained in 1846, occupied different posts until 1857 when called to the Episcopal Residence. Named Canon in 1860. Was charged with several communities, especially "La Miséricorde." Retired in 1879, died January 12th, 1889.

He had been named Honorary Canon of Chartres, France.

way prepared, by experience or training, to undertake such a responsible position ; thus she naturally had a great deference for M. Huberdeau's experience and knowledge, and he of course availed himself of it.

Zealous and daring, indifferent to blame or praise, he was clearsighted, impartial and well-intentioned, but little versed in the art of temporizing and waiting for favorable opportunities to realize his projects ; moreover, not making sufficient allowance for men and things, he carried out improvements and reforms with a degree of ardour and energy that compelled submission, without imparting conviction. He was lacking in that moderation, that wise deliberation, that tact, which are so necessary to one who undertakes to direct his fellow-beings without crushing or infringing on human liberty.

One of his first measures was to forbid the Sisters taking charge of the sick, on the ground that it was work ill-befitting their calling and their vows. Some of the Sisters offered their protest. The older members of the Community looked upon this point as essential to their vocation. The chaplain held-out. The Bishop would have preferred slower measures, "but M. Huberdeau went straight on" as the Annals tell us, and when the Bishop's sentiments were quoted, he replied : "Yes, but the "Bishop is in reality delighted with what I am

" doing." This branch of the work was kept up for a time, however, by two " Consecrated " penitents, that is two penitents who, fearing the seductions of the world and yet having no taste for the life adopted by the Magdalenes of the house, undertook to serve the Sisterhood in the domestic work of the Convent.

About this time the Chapel was closed to the public. It was barely large enough for the Community, and owing to a steady increase in the number of outsiders seeking admission, it was found impossible any longer to admit them without enlarging it. This measure was also M. Huberdeau's work. The zealous chaplain desired to separate the Religious as much as possible from the people of the world. For this same reason, he restricted the number and the duration of visits to the parlor, and even undertook to make sundry alterations in the Rule. This latter was going beyond his powers, and the Superior referred the matter to the Bishop. The result was that M. Huberdeau was instructed not to touch the Rules without having first consulted the diocesan authorities.

He was shortly afterwards replaced by a new chaplain. Rev. M. Martin had the same zeal as his predecessor for the sanctification of souls, and showed great ability in dealing with temporal affairs.

He rendered service to the Community by teaching them book-keeping, and systematizing the records of the Institution. He also applied himself to training the Sisters in singing for he was convinced, and rightly so—that nothing is better calculated to maintain piety and add to the dignity of divine worship, than well-executed singing. He was not the first one who had insisted on this important point, for from the very origin of the Community, the Sisters had been taught the Gregorian chant. When the chaplains were unable to teach them, the Bishop himself became their teacher, so eager was he that they might sing the praises of God in a seemly manner. He even gave them the first liturgical books which they possessed. M. Valade, a priest from the Cathedral, had also, a few years earlier, rendered great service to the Community in this respect.

Nor did M. Martin overlook the Magdalenes, who up to that time had continued to live with the penitents and followed one and the same rule with them. This state of things could not continue to exist without many disadvantages on both sides. To the young Superior belongs the merit of perceiving and removing the difficulty. The Magdalenes were placed apart, and formed, as it were, a separate Community, and a novitiate was opened for the

training of recruits for their ranks. They were at first permitted to make but temporary vows, but erelong—1866,—three of them pronounced perpetual vows. This work succeeded as well as could be expected, for in 1872, when Mother M. de la Miséricorde ceased to be Superior, the number of Magdalenes was twenty-two.

This continuous and uniform development of the essential work of the Order, soon compelled the Sisters to give up certain accessory works which they had theretofore been enabled to take in hand, but which it had become impossible for them to carry on. About five years previously they had undertaken the work of sheltering poor homeless orphan girls, who, in a large city, are but too often destined to become a prey to vice and corruption. It was a good, a most meritorious work; it had been undertaken most cheerfully, and gladly indeed would the Sisters have continued to carry it on, but it was utterly impossible to accomplish so much. The Community must work within the sphere of its providential mission. The orphans were, therefore, placed with respectable families, where they would have the benefit of good example and a christian training.

The Sisters also at this time gave up another work which, through certain circumstances, had

devolved upon the Community. When the Sisters left the "Corporation house," it was taken by Miss Bissonnette, a pious woman, who had taken charge of a certain number of unfortunate girls who had fallen from virtue, or whose reputation had suffered, in the hope of leading them back to a better life. Following the Bishop's advice, the Sisters consented to lend a helping hand to Miss Bissonnette. The latter at first desired it, but divergence of views and the unyielding character of the directress, rendered any united action impossible. A heavy debt and an utter lack of public sympathy and support, soon brought the work to an end. Happily for the unfortunate inmates, the Community came to the rescue, and gave them a home, thus saving them from falling back into the ever yawning abyss of vice. On being received into the Community, they took the name of "Daughters of St. Thaïs," in honor of the illustrious Egyptian penitent of that name. They were placed in the brick house purchased from Mr. Lacroix in 1862, and situated near the corner of Lagauchetière and St. Hubert Streets. Thanks to the influence and earnest prayers of the Sisters, the great majority of these unfortunate young women were sincerely converted. They formed the nucleus of the class now called the "Consacrées." Those who were found to be incorrigible, were placed

in the hands of the city authorities and committed to prison.

The whole strength of the Community was then centered on the work for which Mother de la Nativité had founded it. A re-organization of the administrative Council was then felt to be a matter of necessity. The relatively small number of religious had rendered it necessary to admit therein the Mistresses of Novices, Magdalenes, and Penitents, and it was decided that this should no longer be the case. The costume now worn by the religious was adopted about this same period. The earlier dress resembled too closely that worn by the Hotel-Dieu Sisters, a cloistered order, for whom they were often mistaken by outsiders.

Finally, Mother M. de la Miséricorde took active measures for the liquidation of the debt of the Community. It amounted to $20,000,—a large sum, considering that the Community was then nearly destitute of resources. By good management and economy, the generosity of friends and the collections taken up yearly by the Sisters, within the diocese, and often outside its limits, the entire sum was paid off within the space of six years. During this interval, the Community rented a farm near St. Anne du Bout de l'Ile, in the hope of creating a revenue for the Community; but the experiment

was not a success, and the farm was given up after a year's trial.

The house was thus on the road to prosperity when the news of the approval of the Institute arrived from Rome, on the 7th of June, 1867. Soon afterwards a laudatory Brief emanating from the Sacred Congregation appointed to examine the constitutions, was received by the Superior. These favors caused an immense joy among the Sisters. They could now work and devote themselves without fear, since God, by the voice of His Vicar on earth, had accepted and blessed their labors and their sacrifices. God was, indeed, with them ; the future seemed to smile on them more kindly, and they faced it with increased ardour and confidence. The Community had steadily increased from year to year, and at the end of 1872, there were fifty-six professed Sisters ; the average number of candidates in the novitiate was ten. The number of Penitents was continually on the increase ; in that year three hundred and twenty-three were received, and there were two hundred and thirty births in the Hospital. These figures show, better than any possible description, the state and position of the house when Mother M. de la Miséricorde's term of office expired.

The Community was preparing for the new elections, when their generous and devoted protector,

Mr. Olivier Berthelet, died. (September 25th, 1872.) His death was the faithful echo of his charitable and self-sacrificing life. The Sisters mourned for him as for a friend and a father: the services he had rendered the Community, for over twenty-five years, were such, that God alone could fittingly reward him. His memory will be forever cherished and blessed in the Order.

A few days after this sad event, Bishop Bourget visited the house and presided over the elections, which gave to the Community for Superior, Mother St. Rose de Lima. Mother M. de la Miséricorde was too young to be re-elected; for the limit of age required by the constitutions approved by Rome was then thirty-five years and she was but thirty-four. She was, however, elected Bursar.

The new Superior had until then lived in the shade, and consequently was but ill-prepared to undertake the direction of the house. Firm and energetic by nature, she insisted on a strict observance of the rule, and herself gave the example. But the fear of losing her authority made her susceptible and suspicious, and she acted with a degree of severity not counterbalanced by any eminent qualities, and which caused many a difficulty in the Community.

Nevertheless, the work prospered. The yearly

collections extended over a vaster field ; the Sisters went beyond the limits of Lower-Canada, and made their appeal for aid in Ottawa, and also in Portland, where the Bishop received them with great cordiality and interrupted a call for help in behalf of his own diocesan works, in order to leave more abundant gleanings for these new Ruths.—A few years later, in 1873, we find them in Toronto, and then in New-York, where they attempted without success to found a first mission or branch of the Order. In the following year they went through the dioceses of Springfield, Kingston and San Francisco. The harvest increased in proportion as the field widened, and the collections reached successively : three, four, and even five thousand dollars.

In 1874, the Community was in readiness to undertake the construction of a large wing, west of the building erected by Mr. Berthelet fifteen years before. It was finished two years later, and dedicated by Bishop Bourget. The same day, April 8th, 1876, the worthy prelate had the consolation of distributing to all the professed Sisters, after having blessed it, the newly-printed book of the Constitutions. " It is a very simple volume in appearance," said he to them, " but one which you should consider as " a book of life. On receiving it, you will kiss it " with respect and affection, because it manifests

" the will of God to you : after the New Testament, " no book should be dearer to your hearts."

A few days later, Sister St. Jeanne de Chantal, who had shared in the early struggles of the Community and governed it during fifteen years, peacefully departed this life, aged seventy-seven years.— She was at the time a member of the Council. She was an humble and submissive religious and edified her companions, cheerfully accepting a life of obscurity, after having filled the most important offices in the Order. She suffered greatly during her last illness, but was wholly resigned to the will of God, strengthened by the Bread of Life, and too anxious to please her Heavenly Spouse to think of complaining, she made her last sacrifice with generosity. Her death was rightly deplored by the Community, to which she had rendered great service. Bishop Fabre, then recently consecrated coadjutor to Bishop Bourget, presided over her funeral service, at which a large number of priests attended, in order to pay a last tribute of respect to the venerable religious.

Meantime Bishop Bourget, broken down by hard labor and years, and desirous, moreover, of preparing himself, in recollection and solitude, to give an account to God of his long administration, had taken the resolution of retiring to a country house at

Sault-au-Récollet, where several aged and infirm priests already resided. Once, and once only, did he again visit the Convent in his official capacity : to preside over the election of a member of the Council, in succession to Sister St. Jeanne de Chantal. From that date, June 6th, 1876, until his death, nine years later, the venerable prelate visited his spiritual daughters only at rare intervals, and but for a few moments on each occasion ; but his heart still watched over them, he wrote to them and gave them the benefit of his advice, and received them with fatherly affection whenever they visited him in his retreat. But, above all, he prayed unceasingly for the success of their work and the sanctification of their souls.

MOST REV. J. T. DUHAMEL, D.D.

Archbishop of Ottawa.

CHAPTER II

The First Mission.

Ego elegi vos... posui vos... ut eatis, et fructum afferatis. (JOAN XV. 16).
I have chosen you... and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit.

MOTHER St. Rose de Lima was not to see the end of the term of six years in office. Her weak constitution and nervous temperament were soon worn out, by the daily cares and solicitude of government. She sank under the burden, in the month of September, 1876, and she was never to rise again. Her illness continued throughout the winter and was accompanied by cruel sufferings, amidst which all were compelled to admire her patience and moral strength. A few days before her death, she called her Sisters around her bed and begged them to forgive her for all the pain she may have caused them, in the discharge of the duties of

her office, and for the faults which she had herself committed. She recommended to them the practice of regularity, fraternal charity and zeal in striving for perfection. "At the hour of death, we do not "regret the efforts we may have made," said she, "and at that hour, we judge of things very "differently from what we do during life." This occurred during Holy Week, of which according to all appearances she was not to see the end. On Good Friday, she was so weak, that it was easily seen she could not pass the day. "Mother," said the Assistant to her, "you are going to die to-day with "Our Lord, in order to rise speedily from the dead "with Him." "What happiness!" she answered, with a heavenly smile.—Those were her last words. She expired peacefully at about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Sister St. Thérèse de Jésus, who was elected to succeed her, was of a gentle and timid disposition. Her preference was for humble offices and rude labors. Greatly alarmed when she learned that the Community were thinking of her for the office of Superior, she begged of them, in pity, not to lay such a burden upon her; but no attention was paid to her earnest pleading. Her rule was an exceedingly mild one. She was greatly helped in her administration by the chaplain, M. J. M. A. Brien,

and under her management, the Community attained a degree of prosperity it had never before known. Mother St. Thérèse de Jésus had been Superior only a few days, when a fire broke out in the soap-house and soon endangered the entire Convent. However, the firemen arrived in time to conquer the destructive element and preserve the house from a catastrophe. This was not the first time that the Community had been threatened by fire, but Divine Providence watched over its own work and no serious loss was ever incurred.

The work of erecting new buildings was continued. The Chapel built by Mr. Berthelet had become too small, and the Community resolved to build a new one. The present Chapel with its portico opening on Dorchester Street, was the result of this project. The Very Rev. H. Moreau, V. G., blessed and laid the corner-stone of the edifice, with all possible solemnity. Bishop Bourget was not present at this ceremony, but he wrote as follows to the Superior : " I shall not fail to take part in spirit " in all your joys and hopes," and in another letter : " I pray the Mother of Mercies to enable you to " carry-out successfully your holy undertaking."

The undertaking was completed as the venerable Archbishop had desired, and a year later—August 31st, 1879,—Bishop Duhamel, of Ottawa, dedicated

the new sanctuary, and in eloquent terms voiced the sentiments of joy, love, and gratitude that filled to overflowing the hearts of his hearers. In the course of his remarks, His Lordship had been able to speak highly of the Community upon good grounds, for he had had, for several months previously, an opportunity of witnessing its eminent services, in his own episcopal city.—He was, as we have stated before, one of the first to open his diocese to the mendicant Sisters, and soon afterwards conceived the idea of establishing them at Ottawa. Rev. M. Bouillon, then treasurer of the Cathedral at Ottawa, was delegated to deal with the matter. The conditions were easily settled, and in fact the Sisters saw no serious difficulty in the way of this project.—God had blessed them, and there were now seventy-two professed Sisters, and such a foundation would be doubtless the source of new vocations. Bishop Bourget was consulted, and from the depths of his retreat, he applauded the scheme and wrote to the Superior as follows : "I have long prayed that you " might found a new mission." Six religious were selected to go forth and take possession of the house and property, bought from the episcopal corporation of Ottawa, for the new establishment. Bishop Fabre celebrated Mass in the Community Chapel and blessed the first missionaries on the day of their

HOUSE OF MERCY, OTTAWA.

departure. The Ottawa house, known as "House "of Mercy," was opened on May 19th, 1879, and in the month of August following, Sister St. Stanislas arrived at Ottawa, with the title of Superior. She was accompanied by three Magdalenes.

The beginnings of the new work were not accomplished without trials, and we know, from one of Bishop Bourget's letters, that, but for the help of God, the little colony would have given way to discouragement. "Far from being discouraged," wrote the pious Archbishop, "you should be more "courageous than heretofore in the discharge of all "your important duties. Trials are always a good "sign, and there is less danger of being lost then, "than when everything is prosperous.—Take cour- "age then! Your foundation in Ottawa will prosper "only when it is on Calvary, at the foot of the "Cross." The clouds dispersed little by little, and brighter days soon dawned.—The following year the Federal Government granted an annual subsidy to the house, thus recognizing its public utility. Enlargements were soon needed, and in 1883 a large wing was added to the buildings already in use.

Meantime the number of inmates at the Mother-house was continually increasing. The census of 1882 gives seventy-seven professed Sisters; ten novices; forty-one Magdalenes; thirty-one Con-

secrated girls and six nurses. As to the penitents, whose number varied from day to day, it is safe to say that often as many as a hundred were to be found in the house at the same time. There was, therefore, an urgent need of again enlarging the house, and it was decided to build a large wing on Campeau Street that would be joined to the older part of the buildings and match with the west wing inaugurated in 1876. Work was immediately begun, but the Sisters had not counted on the opposition of the City corporation who purposed widening Campeau Street, by taking a strip of land off the garden of the Community. Permission to build was refused ;—requests were unsuccessful. A petition to the City Council, signed by a large number of influential citizens and proprietors was also rejected. All work had, in the meantime, to be suspended.

The Sisters had recourse to St. Joseph in order to obtain a favorable settlement of the difficulty. Many prayers were offered up in the Community, and the statue of the Saint was placed in a niche close to the intended site. Heaven's action accomplished what man's influence was powerless to do. On January 23rd, 1884, the City corporation in Council assembled, rescinded the resolution ordering the widening of the Street, and left the Sisters

in full possession of their ground. It was on a Wednesday and the Church celebrated that day the feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin. St. Joseph's protection was evident. In thanksgiving, the statue, which had passed part of the Fall and Winter outdoors, was brought in and installed in a place of honor in the Sisters' choir, during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, at which the *Te Deum* was sung. The ceremony ended with a procession through the corridors of the house. The statue of St. Joseph, after having been borne in triumph, with lighted tapers and the chanting of pious hymns, was replaced in the choir and from thence removed to a place of honor over the entrance door of the new wing, where it is still to be seen.

This prosperity was the fruit of many trials and sufferings, and Mother St. Thérèse was sometimes quite disheartened. Interior difficulties were joined to exterior trials, and the Superior was overcome with grief whenever she was forced to adopt energetical measures of repression. "Do not be "cast down," wrote Bishop Bourget to her, "if the "enemy of all good seeks to take away your peace "of mind and soul,—which is the greatest of bless- "ings, since it is a foretaste of the peace of heaven, "—hold fast, and despise the illusions of the "devil.—Do not forget that God is always ready

" to help us in our greatest needs, when He sees " that we feel our incapacity and unworthiness ; " for, the more useless we are, the more pleasure " He takes in making use of us to do good, provided " we place our confidence in Him alone and seek " only His greater glory. Serve this God of good- " ness, therefore, with holy joy." Such encouragement always quickly imparted courage to the Superior, and she went to work again with fresh energy and ardor.

When her term of office expired, she was delighted to return to the obscurity of the ranks, but the confidence her Sisters had in her was such, that they did not leave her entirely at rest. At the elections which took place on August 31st, 1883, she was selected to fill the office of Assistant to the new Superior, Mother St. Zotique.

These elections were followed by important reforms. The number of Councillors or Assistants, which had until then been six, was reduced to four. —The practice of consulting in all important matters the Capitulary Sisters, that is to say, those ten years professed, which had until then prevailed, was abolished. But twelve among them were chosen as advisors, with the privilege of electing the Superior. Lastly, it was decided that before being admitted to take perpetual vows, each religious should make temporary vows for five years.

CHAPTER III

Relations of Bishop Bourget with the Community.

Mementote præpositorum vestrorum qui vobis locuti sunt verbum Dei ; quorum intuentes exitum conversationis, imitamini fidem. (HEB. XIII. 7.)
Remember your prelates who have spoken the word of God to you ; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

DURING Mother St. Zotique's tenure of office, Bishop Bourget, the founder of the Community of the Sisters of Miséricorde, died, at his residence at Sault-au-Récollet. This aged and illustrious prelate was struck down by what he felt to be a fatal disease, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1884.—Bishop Fabre administered to him the last Sacraments of the Church, towards the end of December.—At the sight of his God, who deigned thus to visit him, the venerable Archbishop exclaimed : "My God, this is probably the last "time I shall receive Thee upon earth ; I bow to

" Thee as my Creator and I cast myself into the " arms of Thy divine mercy." After having asked pardon of all those he might in any way have offended, and prayed for his Church of Montreal, he added : " My God, I hope that Thou wilt soon " show me mercy and admit me to contemplate " Thee, face to face."

It does not enter into the plan of this work to describe the death of the saintly bishop. The story of his last hours and of his entire life, belongs to the history of the diocese of Montreal. But we cannot, in this rapid sketch of the origin of " La " Miséricorde," refrain from recording those touching appeals to Divine Mercy, which fell from the lips of the illustrious prelate on his deathbed, because it seems to us that among the many works of his long episcopate, none perhaps could have been better calculated to dispell the apprehensions of his last moments than this work of the Miséricorde ; for according to our Saviour's own words : " Blessed " are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

He died June 8th, 1885. His funeral was a triumph.

Having reached the closing point of this glorious career which will henceforth occupy so important a place in the history of the diocese of Montreal, it will not be useless to turn back for a moment and

cast a glance over the relations of Bishop Bourget with the Community of Miséricorde. There, without any intention on our part, we shall see once more the countenance so simple, and yet so dignified, of the illustrious prelate, together with his eminent qualities of mind and heart, his piety, his spirit of faith, his ardent zeal for the conversion of sinners, and his firm confidence in Divine Providence.

We have seen that the work of "La Miséricorde" was born, so to speak, of the heart of this charitable pastor. For over five years he cherished the thought of it, without declaring his mind to anyone; waiting patiently, praying and watching for the providential hour. And when his penetrating eye discovered in Madame Jetté, Heaven's chosen instrument for the accomplishment of his long-cherished design, he seized upon her with all the authority of his apostolical mission, solved all her difficulties, cut-short the hesitation inspired by her humility, helped her to decide and urged her forward. "God wills it! God wills it!" were his inspiring words. Soon, however, came days of trial and difficulty: in the interior of the house poverty and all its consequences;—outside, contempt and reproaches. The Bishop taxed his own means to the utmost to relieve the most pressing needs of the house, but he was poor himself, and the sufferings of his struggling

children grieved him to the heart. He was accused of imprudence, and the sublime inspiration which produced an institution most useful to society and honorable to the Church of Canada, was called a caprice and a whim; the good pastor let people talk as they pleased and strove to sustain Madame Jetté's courage; for he knew that words pass away but deeds and works remain.

Later on when the work developed itself he took steps to provide resources for it. He appealed to the charity of the faithful; he applied to generous-hearted christians favored with worldly possessions; he gave, himself, also,—little if he had but little, and much, whenever Divine Providence placed large sums at his disposal. When the house named St. Françoise Romaine was bought, the Bishop wished to be the first to contribute towards it. He had in his possession only eight dollars, but no matter! he gave that much, feeling sure that Divine Providence would provide the rest. When he could not *give* money, he lent it, without charging interest. Thus, on two different occasions when the house was in need of large sums of money to meet payments, he handed to the Superior, first, four thousand dollars and then twelve hundred. He did not wish the Community to be rich, but he did all he could to provide what was necessary. He long retained the

direction of the house in his own hands; but when its development became such that it required more time than he could well dispose of, he appointed an ecclesiastical Superior to look after the material interests of the house.

However, this is not the most beautiful or striking part the great Bishop played in the foundation of this house. A community is a living body, whose distinctive mark, whose principle of life, is its mind—its soul, and needless to say, also that which is most important. Bishop Bourget understood this, and with the help of God, he endeavored to form and fashion, with his own hands, the soul of the new Community. And as the soul of a community is, in some sort, the outcome of the souls of all those who are its members, he did not fail to give close and special care and attention to certain souls in need of it,—judging rightly, with St. François de Sales, that one single soul is a diocese vast enough for a Bishop.

One of the first chaplains, M. Pilon, was frequently absent from his post on account of poor health, and on such occasions the pious Bishop, whenever it was possible, gladly took it upon himself to discharge the duties of his office.—He would set-out alone and on foot from his residence, which was but a short distance off, and make his way to the

Convent in spite of rain, mud or snow. He often arrived without being expected by the Community, said mass, heard confessions, gave instructions to the Sisters or the Magdalenes, visited and consoled the penitents ; sometimes even he would shut himself up in the Chaplain's modest room and there, in tranquillity and sure of being undisturbed by anyone in his quiet Bethany, finished writing some Pastoral letter or other work of the kind, commenced and too often interrupted at his own residence. When the bell rang for the Community exercises, he would leave his work in order to preside in person over the sacred office or other function : " But does it not inconvenience you, my Lord ?" said the Superior to him, on one occasion : " No, my dear " daughter," he replied, " it is an agreeable relaxa- " tion for me to see you pray." At such times, the Bishop's meals were necessarily of a most frugal kind, and the Sister who waited on him, one day apologised for the humble fare : " Do not worry " about me, my daughter," he replied, " I act in this " way in order to avoid being overcome by sleep."

Using the words and following the example of the Divine Master, he would sometimes say as he entered : " I came not for the just, but for sin- " ners," and then he would visit his dear penitents. Such was then the goodness animating his words,

the gentleness of his countenance and his manner, that many of them would burst into tears. The Bishop, much affected himself, would console these unfortunate girls, and bid them hope for God's mercy and forgiveness. He assisted several of them at the hour of death, and by the charm of his conversation and exhortations, mitigated the terrors of the passage from time to eternity. One day, he went so far as to condescend to become himself their guardian. The Sisters were anxious to gain the indulgence of the Jubilee granted by the Holy Father in 1853. One of the conditions being the visiting of several churches, the Bishop said to them : " Go, my daughters, and visit the churches, I will " watch over these poor children until your return."

His fatherly heart was filled with joy whenever he learned that some one of them, touched by grace, had resolved to break forever with the world and shut herself up, in the blessed solitude where she had found once more the God of her youth and her innocence.—He spared no pains to secure this happy result. The zealous pastor taught them their catechism, delivered formal instructions and sermons for their benefit, and gave wise counsel in abundance to the Sister in charge of the penitents, prepared rules and regulations for them, and in short left no stone unturned to ensure their conversion and their

perseverance. We read in a manuscript note that : " It was a touching sight to see this holy Bishop " discharging in all simplicity the humble functions " of a catechist. One day, during the tenancy of " the "Corporation house," he crossed the street " wearing his rochet and camail, followed by all " the poor girls, whom he was so eager to instruct. " It was truly 'the Good Shepherd, bringing back " the lost sheep to the fold.' "

His great solicitude was not fruitless. The number of Magdalenes soon increased sufficiently to permit the establishment of a separate group within the Community, with its own particular rules and customs. The Bishop wished to inaugurate it himself and consecrate it to God from its foundation, with his blessing and his prayers.—He did even more, for he often went so far as to visit the inmates himself and give them instructions on the duties and virtues of their state. Later on, he consented to preach to them in their yearly retreat. From what has been preserved of his instructions to this part of his flock, it is easily seen that he was fond of presenting Mary Magdalene to them as a model for their imitation. He recurs to her over and over again, and draws the most precious and consoling lessons for his hearers from the life of the saint, " to " whom much had been forgiven because she loved

" much." "The good Master," he would say to them, "has looked upon you, in the same way that " he formerly looked upon Magdalene; in his sight " your sins no longer exist, and if they are recalled " on the day of judgment, it will be for your glory." He visited them on their feast day, and his tender and compassionate heart was filled with happiness at the sight of their joy, and deeply moved by their fervor. " I was so much affected," he one day said, " on seeing them kneeling before me to renew " their act of Consecration to St. Magdalene, that " I was unable to speak to them. I seemed to see " Mary of Bethany at the feet of our Saviour."

When the Community was definitively constituted and a Chapel built which permitted divine service to be celebrated in the house, it became necessary to form a choir of singers chosen from among the Sisters. Some few of them were familiar with profane music and singing, but all were ignorant of plain chant. Bishop Bourget wished to prepare them himself for the first offices they were to sing. It was a few days before Palm Sunday in 1860, and they were to sing on that day the hymn " *Gloria* " *tibi rex*," and the Vespers of the day. The Bishop taught them how to chant the psalms, and after the practice said: "Sing with confidence, and I will " send Canon Plamondon to officiate for you." The

Canon was an excellent man, as we have seen, but it must be owned that he was anything but a musician. During Holy Week, the devoted founder privately visited the Convent and presided at a practice of the chant and the Offices for Easter; High Mass was to be celebrated for the first time, on that day, in the Community Chapel. These lessons were continued afterwards. It was deeply touching to see the venerable Bishop filling the humble office of singing-master, and none of those who heard him could ever forget the words inflamed with zeal for the glory of God, that fell from his lips, as he exhorted his daughters to acquit themselves with piety of the function of singers.

"Do not forget," said he, "that you are fulfilling "the office of the Angels. When you enter Heaven, "the Virgins will come to meet you and say: "'Here, we sing the praises of the Most High.' "You will answer them: 'We are quite accustomed "to that, for it is what we did on earth.'" He availed himself of the words contained in the liturgy to inspire them with good thoughts, or suggest pious practices. One day during the pascal time, they were singing the versicle: "*Mane nobiscum*, "*Domine*," etc., "Stay with us Lord, because it is "towards evening, and the day is now far spent," —words of the disciples of Emmaus to our Saviour,

—and the Bishop said to one of them : " My daughter, is it ever night in your soul ? "—" Alas ! " yes, my Lord, sometimes."—" Well," said he, " at " such times, repeat the prayer of the disciples." The Sisters once asked him to allow them to omit the Commemoration of the Saints, at Vespers, on the plea that the music was too difficult to be sung.— " No, my daughters, you should omit none of the " commemorations, for we need to be protected by " the Saints, and you yourselves need it more than " any other Community." A short time after, the Bishop, perceiving that the Sisters had but one plain chant book, took secretly a Gradual and a Vesperal from the Cathedral choir and gave them to the Community with the injunction to say nothing about it to anyone.

While the venerable Bishop strove to train the Sisters in that exterior chant, which St. Augustine calls "an almost divine science," "*scientia prope* " *divina*," he was more anxious still to teach them that interior harmony which results from the perfect conformity of the soul with every manifestation of the divine Will. For this end, he spared neither exhortations, advice nor letters. He preached no less than four annual retreats, and it would be impossible to tell how many sermons and instructions to the Community. Many of the latter have been

preserved; and in looking them over, we are surprised at the appositeness and readiness with which he avails himself of any special circumstance to inculcate forcibly some essential point of the religious life. These instructions have thus the double advantage of being appropriate to the occasion and circumstances and hence exceedingly varied, and of tending towards the one end—religious perfection. Their doctrinal importance is thus singularly enlarged and they are at the same time characterised by a true unity.

The bonds which attached the distinguished prelate to "La Miséricorde" had been strengthened and drawn closer with his increasing anxiety for the future welfare of the work. Shortly after the reception of the papal Bull approving of the Institution, he spoke openly of his fears. "I was "not without uneasiness," said he, "as to the future "of your Community.—So many obstacles had "arisen on all sides, at its inception, that I feared it "would be abandoned after my death. But God "himself has put an end to my deep anxiety. I "sent your Constitutions to Rome to be revised, "but I had not asked for and dared not ask for, "the approbation of your Institution. Judge of "my surprise, then, on receiving, with the notes "and corrections on the Constitutions, the Decree

" approving of your Institute. I could not help " seeing therein a special favor and protection of " Divine Providence; and I can now betake myself " to my rest without the smallest anxiety in your " regard, and feeling sure that, after my death, the " work that Rome has deigned to approve will " continue to be protected."

Among the different practices of fraternal piety suggested by the holy Bishop, to the Community, we read of one which is peculiarly touching.—After the death of a Sister there is drawn up, under the title of necrology, a clear and forcible summary of the virtues practised, the several offices held, and the obstacles overcome by the deceased. This short notice is read in the refectory on the anniversary of the death, and recalls to those still living, the memory of their predecessors, appeals to them to pray for the repose of their souls and is a continual incentive to the faithful practice of their rule.—How often on leaving the refectory, where they have listened to the enumeration of the virtues of the early pioneers of the Order, must not the Sisters apply to themselves the words of St. Augustine: " Can I not do what this one or that one has done?"

During his numerous visits to the Community, the Bishop took special pleasure in speaking of the early difficulties of the work he now saw so pros-

perous. In replying to the address presented to him on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee, October 18th, 1872, His Lordship said : " Your work is one " of those that touch my heart most deeply, for it " seems to me to be preeminently God's own work. " Your efforts seemed barren at first, but you knew " these words of Our Lord : *Fear not, little flock,* " *for it hath pleased your Heavenly Father to give* " *you a kingdom.*—That kingdom is the develop- " ment of your Institution,—it is the souls you " bring back to the path of virtue, at the cost of " unnumbered sacrifices. How many souls have " been regenerated in this holy house ! They were " precious pearls trodden under foot : they have " been raised out of the dirt and filth in which they " lay and cleansed : and now they are shining " pearls that Heaven and even earth admire."

After 1876, the visits of the venerable Bishop become rare. He had gone into retirement at the Residence St. Janvier, at Sault-au-Récollet, where he lived in solitude preparing himself for the passage into eternity.—He did not cease, however, to render service to the works created and sustained by his zeal. His advice and direction were frequently asked for, and freely given in admirable letters, redolent of faith and charity, filled with wise counsels and that practical spirit which rendered his

administration so fruitful in good results. We shall cite only one of the letters. He had been questioned as to the line of conduct to be held in regard to the penitents in order to obtain their conversion : " Sacrifice yourselves with all possible " zeal," said the saintly and venerable Bishop, " for the perfect conversion and perseverance of " your dear penitents. To that end, make use of " the following means :

" 1st.—Instruct them as thorougly as possible in " all christian duties. Teach them to love Our " Lord, the God of all goodness, and Mary the " Mother of Mercies. Impress upon them and " make them understand, that their happiness in " this world and in the next depends on this.

" 2nd.—Be careful to prepare them well for the " retreats that they are accustomed to make during " their stay at the Maternity.—The more piously " they make these retreats, the better they will un- " derstand the happiness to be found in serving God.

" 3rd.—Use all possible means of inducing them " to make good confessions and communions, and " instill into their hearts a lively horror of sacrilege.

" 4th.—Put them on their guard against the " scandals of the world, bad company, and the " proximate occasions of sin, which are always the " cause of their relapsing into evil.

" 5th.—Endeavor to induce them, when they " leave the Maternity, to go to service only in " respectable families, where good example will be " given them.

" 6th.—Teach them to pray every day for " perseverance in well-doing ; and admonish them " often that they should continually beg for that " grace, in all religious exercices, especially during " Mass and after Holy Communion.—Those who " are in the House should pray for the perseverance " of those who have left it. Make them all under- " stand well that their honor as well as their happi- " ness are at stake and depend on their not being " obliged to return to the Maternity.

" 7th.—When they are about returning to the " world, give them a short rule of life, the principal " article being the obligation to go to confession " every month, and receive Holy Communion often, " following their Confessor's advice."

Here we have a detailed programme of the mode of dealing with the penitents, in order to change their dispositions and bring them back to the path of duty. From the precision of his counsels, it is easy to see that the saintly Bishop had been in direct contact with the penitents, that he knew the inclinations and weakness of their souls. He points out the remedies to be used, with the confidence of a physician who has closely studied the malady.

The Sisters often consulted him on the virtues of their state in life, or as to what they should do in order to realize in all possible perfection his ideal of a Sister of Miséricorde. The Bishop would thereupon remind them of their pious foundress and repeat to them again and again: "Behold your "model; imitate your Mother." We have before us a memorandum in his own handwriting entitled: "*Portrait d'une vraie Sœur de la Miséricorde.*" It begins with these words: "To recognize her, it is "sufficient to cast a glance over the life of the "venerable Mother de la Nativité." After a rapid sketch of the virtues practised by this "valiant "woman,"—humility, patience, mortification, blind submission to the good pleasure of God, ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, contempt of the world, meekness and charity towards her Sisters,—after having depicted, in sober hues, but in sharp relief the character of that soul "so intimately united to "God, delighting in prayer and pious exercises, "ever ready to sacrifice herself for the glory of "God and the conversion of sinners," he concludes as follows: "By contemplating night and day the "beautiful character of their Mother, the Sisters "will become true Sisters of Mercy, for that good "Mother was a perfect model of regularity, or "rather, a living rule."

Towards the end of the year 1879, a biographical notice of Mother de la Nativité and her work, was communicated to the Bishop. The work had been written under his own eye; he had imparted his own recollections and furnished some of the incidents, and in doing so said: "You must make "known the virtues which your mother hid so "carefully: she is no longer in need of humility "now."—His Lordship read with lively interest the little biography, and said it was "a faithful "mirror wherein the admirable qualities of that "noble soul are marvellously reflected." He wrote the Sisters a long letter, setting forth his satisfaction, and exhorting them to walk in the footsteps of their venerable Foundress: "The conclusion you shall "draw from these interesting details, will doubtless "be that you must strive generously to follow her "example, to imitate her virtues, embrace with cour- "age all the crosses sent you by Divine Providence, "and carry on the Work of Miséricorde, which cost "her so great a price, with renewed zeal and courage, "to meet fearlessly the insults and mockery of the "world, to place all your confidence in God who has "never failed you in time of need, to love simplicity "in all things, to sacrifice all for the sake of peace, "to love one another like true Sisters, and the "daughters of so good a mother, to practise unceas-

" ingly that blind obedience which excludes mur-
" muring, and lastly to be living copies of your
" Foundress, in order that we may recognize her by
" seeing you."

Not only does the Bishop urge the Sisters to take their Mother for their model, but he also advises them to have recourse, in private, to her intercession. He himself composed a prayer to that end.—" It is
" not forbidden to invoke her," said he, " and you
" should do so every day, although she is not honored
" publicly."—" I advise you," he wrote, " to invoke
" your good Mother in your private devotions, in
" order that you may obtain through her inter-
" sion, that the good spirit which animated her
" may be bestowed on you. You would also do
" well to wear some little relic of her, or things that
" she had in use."

In suggesting these pious practices to the Sisters, Bishop Bourget manifested the sentiment of profound veneration with which Mother de la Nativité's virtues had always inspired him, as well as his ardent desire of seeing her daughters advance day by day, with ever increasing fervor, in the path of religious perfection.

The venerable Archbishop paid his last visit to the Community on March 29th, 1881. His brow was crowned with the double halo of age and

misfortune. It was the period when the venerable octogenarian made a personal appeal throughout the diocese to solicit charitable contributions in aid of fund for the Cathedral of Montreal. He was received by all with transports of joy. Sisters, Novices, Magdalenes, and "Consecrated" gave expression to their gratitude, their submission and affection, in special addresses. The Bishop replied with the simple, quiet and dignified kindness, that never forsook him. He was struck by the contrast apparent from an involuntary comparison of what he then saw, with the condition of the house thirty years before.—"The humiliations and sacrifices of "former days," he said, "have brought down upon "you God's blessing and earned for you the prosper- "ity you now enjoy." He then urged them each and all to practise great fidelity to the grace of God, and after having invoked a supreme benediction on the house and Community, which were the fruit of his own zeal and charity, he left them, never more to return.

The memory of the great and saintly Bishop is still living in the hearts of the Sisters, who pride themselves upon being his daughters; and with his memory, his spirit of charity, his compassion and his tenderness for sinful souls,—and, if after the lapse of years, one wished to fathom the full extent,

and divine ardor of Bishop Bourget's commiseration and love for the lost sheep of the fold, it would be sufficient to enter his convent, and witness the good accomplished therein.

CHAPTER IV

New Buildings.—A new Branch house.

Benedictio patris firmat domum filiorum. (Eccl. iii. 11).
The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children.

EVER since the death of Bishop Bourget, the work of the Community has steadily grown and developed itself, to the benefit of society and of souls. Large additions, rendered necessary by the increasing number of its inmates, have been made to the Mother-house in Montreal, while a promising branch establishment has been founded at New-York.

In the summer of 1885, the old "Lacroix house," which had been used as a Maternity Hospital for several years, was demolished, and on its site was erected a large building known later on by the name of "The Work-shops" or "Dependencies."

MATERNITY HOSPITAL, ST. HUBERT STREET.

It contained the laundry, drying-room, shoe-shop, spinning and weaving-room, and other rooms used for the various industries needed in a Community, to meet its own wants or to supplement its resources by working for outsiders. These "work-shops" have since disappeared, or rather they have been blended with a much larger building begun in 1897, and known as the "Infant Asylum," which will be spoken of later on.

In the same year, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14th) the corner-stone of the present Maternity Hospital was laid.—This edifice designed with the utmost care and provided with all modern improvements, has afforded to the penitents a healthy abode. It was dedicated by the Chaplain of the Institution, Rev. M. Brien, on April 20th, 1887. It fronts on St. Hubert Street, on which is its principal entrance. This building is connected with the Convent by means of the Infant Asylum, with which it forms a vast square, enclosing nearly the whole extent of the Community garden.

The Maternity is a four story building with basement. On the first floor a private Hospital under the direction of Dr. Brodeur. It was opened to receive patients who had need of the physician's immediate and continual care. It lasted but three years. The apartments are now occupied by lady-

boarders. The penitents sick-wards and the nurses' apartments are on the second floor. The third contains large wards for both the French and English speaking penitents, an oratory for retreats and several rooms. The dormitories are on the fourth floor.

To meet the expenditure on these large buildings, the Community had no other resource than public or private charity. We have already spoken of collections taken up in different dioceses of North America. The time has gone by when pastors refused to tolerate among their flock, under pretext of scandal, the humble servants of God commissioned to solicit alms. Their work is now better understood ; they are heartily welcomed ; those who once showed repugnance, now receive them most cordially and charity triumphs at last. At Montreal, bazaars were organized, through the help of kind friends, and from time to time generous souls, on whom God had bestowed earthly goods in abundance, were moved to render aid.

We would fain speak of their devotedness, their sacrifices, and write their names in letters of gold in the annals of charity,—but how can we " sound " the trumpet " before them, when they themselves, docile to Our Lord's teachings, " let not their left " hand know what the right doeth." They do not

seek their reward in the vain praises of men, but from God, the eternal remunerator, who rewards even a cup of cold water given for His love ; their names, inscribed in the Book of Life, will shine throughout the ages of eternity. But we feel bound to proclaim their liberality and bless their inexhaustible charity ; and when we see them always so lavish of their gold, their time and their pains in favor of all the works of mercy of which Montreal may well be proud, we are reminded of the words of a famous general, which are equal in themselves to a long panegyric : " It is always the same that " get killed."—Yes, in the warfare organized by Catholic charity against human miseries, the same good souls are always the first to man the breach, and the first to open their hands to give, their hearts to console and their lips to encourage.—" I " bring you the sum I promised," said one of these generous benefactors, " but that does not mean that "I will not give you more than I promised ; on " the contrary, I shall be always happy to help you " according to the measure of prosperity granted " me by Divine Providence."—Divine Providence must have multiplied his resources, for he often visited the Community bringing with him on every occasion a generous offering.—His invariable reply to the Reverend Mother's grateful acknowledgments

was : " Do not thank me, thank God for giving me " the means and the will to help you a little." May his charity and disinterestedness find many imitators ! To such persons may surely be applied the words of God addressed to the Patriarch Abraham : " I am thy protector and thy reward infinitely " great : *Ego merces tua magna nimis.*"

The most important event of the year 1887 was the foundation of a mission or branch at New-York. Dr. McQuirk, rector of St. Paul's Church, had founded a year before, at Clifton, Staten Island, a Maternity for the poor, and had placed it under the direction of a Community who had already in the City of New-York, a Foundling Asylum and a Maternity available only for those able to pay. At the end of the year, not being able to agree with the Community as to certain conditions, he conceived the idea of entrusting the work to the Sisters of Miséricorde, of whom he had heard a favorable account. He came to Montreal to open negotiations with the Community, and at the same time, His Grace, Archbishop Corrigan wrote to Archbishop Fabre on the subject. The affair was soon brought to a favorable conclusion. Sister St. Stanislas who was appointed Superior, left on September 1st, for the new mission, accompanied by four Sisters. The new premises at Clifton were of a character to

MOST REV. M. A. CORRIGAN, D.D.,
Archbishop of New York.

remind the Sisters of the early days of the work at Montreal : the building was a wooden one of large dimensions, too large in fact for the number of inmates, and so old that many of the rooms were unfit to live in. The result was a winter of much discomfort and suffering. It was impossible for the Sisters to remain there any longer, and in the spring Dr. McQuirk rented a house for them in the city, on West 123rd Street. The house at Clifton was retained for the children, as the site was good and the air pure and bracing.

Several other Sisters were sent to the new mission, under the direction of Sister St. M. Madeleine. They saw at once that the success of the work depended greatly on its being recognized by the State as useful to society, and measures were immediately taken to attain that end. As Dr. McQuirk's ideas differed somewhat from theirs, and difficulties seemed inevitable, the Archbishop, taking the house under his own immediate protection, appointed one of his Vicars-General, Mgr. Donnelly, ecclesiastical Superior of the Community. A new era now dawned for the work : the refuge was incorporated under the laws of the State of New-York, November 22nd, 1888, by the name of the " New-York " Mothers' Home of the Sisters of Miséricorde."

In the following year, 1889, the house at Clifton

was given up, the Sisters of Charity having agreed to receive the children, and as the house on 123rd Street was now too small, a more suitable house and several lots of land on East 86th Street were bought. The Archbishop dedicated the new Hospital and his blessing was a pledge of its coming prosperity. Before five years had elapsed, the Sisters were enabled to record in their Annual Report, that 717 penitents had been admitted gratuitously since the foundation of the mission.—The Report, it is true, went on to say that: "None have been "refused, whenever it was possible to find space "for a bed." Moreover, no discrimination had been made as to the religion, color, nationality or residence of applicants, and the poor had always had the preference over those whose means enabled them to select any institution they pleased.

After the general elections of 1889 at the Motherhouse in Montreal, Sister M. de la Miséricorde was appointed Superior of the mission in New-York. This house had soon become much too small, and it was absolutely necessary to build. On November 12th, 1893, His Grace, Archbishop Corrigan formally opened and blessed the new "Home," which it took just one year to build and complete at an expense of nearly $100,000.00. It furnished accommodation for one hundred and twenty poor patients,

and forty rooms for private patients, and was provided with all modern conveniences and improvements. The undertaking, of course, burdened the Community with a heavy debt, but they relied on Divine Providence and the generous charity of the citizens of the vast metropolis. Nor was their confidence misplaced. Subscriptions, voluntary donations from individuals and charitable Associations, supplemented the efforts of the Sisters and facilitated their task by keeping them above want. We read in the Annual Report for 1896: "It would be "ungrateful on our part not to acknowledge the "great kindness and boundless generosity of all our "friends, who have been so liberal to us in the past, "and without whose assistance we could not have "succeeded." And further on: "There are many "words and deeds of charity that can be suitably "praised and rewarded only by the Father of Mer-"cies Himself, whose choicest graces and blessings "we implore for all our benefactors." Thanks to the zeal and generosity of its numereus friends, the New-York Mothers' Home was soon able to render eminent services to society. The Official Report of 1894 stated that 284 poor creatures in search of a refuge to save their honour and the good name of their family, had found shelter and care in the Home during the year. Several of them were so

destitute that even clothing had to be provided for them. Seventy-seven poor women, whose husbands were out of work, were taken in and cared for: some of these women were accompanied by children from one to three years of age.

Such results are consoling, and it is not surprising to find that Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington and other large cities in the United States, have manifested a desire of being provided with similar establishments.

The foundation at New-York took place during the administration of Mother St. Zotique, who was Superior general until September, 1889.—She was then replaced by Mother M. du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus. Under the new Superior an effort was made to establish an Orphan Asylum in the country, where the air is so beneficial to children. A large house and farm were bought at St. Hilaire, in the diocese of St. Hyacinth. But the expenses for maintenance and working the farm were so great, that the enterprise was given up a few years later, and the farm and houses rented to private families.

Mother M. du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus endeavored especially to dispel the prejudices which still existed against the work of the Community, in the minds of many lay-men and even some ecclesiastics. Without prejudice to the virtue of humility so

FIRST HOUSE OF NEW YORK MISSION, CLIFTON, S. I.

becoming to a religious community, and with the sole view of removing the obstacles hampering a good work, she wanted that that work should be better known, being convinced that no one could know it well without appreciating it highly and loving it, and, as a natural consequence, promoting its success and its extension. Such was the predominant idea she had in view during her administration.

She was Superior when the last surviving members of the Community who made their profession on January 16th, 1848, died. These were Sister St. Joseph, Sister St. Marie d'Egypte, and Sister M. des Sept Douleurs.—Sister St. Beatrix had preceded them, having died in 1879, after a life of humility, self-sacrifice, obedience and poverty, and so dominated by love of the Blessed Sacrament, that these words of the Royal Psalmist might well be applied to her : " How lovely are Thy tabernacles, " O Lord of hosts ! my soul longeth and fainteth " for the courts of the Lord (1)." She left this earth with the same feelings of joy and satisfaction with which an exile returns to his native country.

Sister St. Joseph gave up her soul to her God on March 10th, 1890. Withdrawn for a moment, and in spite of herself, from the hidden life, in which she placed her delight, to govern the Com-

(1) Ps. 83.

munity, she never ceased to long for the day when she might return to obscure and subordinate labors. She was very clever at carpenter work, and several pieces of furniture, such as desks, step-ladders, &c., which bear witness to her skill, are kept as relics in the Community. She was also most successful in teaching catechism to the penitents, and they, themselves, said of her : " She speaks like a priest."

A few months later the earthly exile of Sister St. Marie d'Egypte came to a close. Her life had been sown with so many sufferings of all kinds, that she had felt that " weariness of living,—*tædium* " *vitæ*," of which the Apostle speaks, and longing for a better life, she often exclaimed with the Psalmist : " Woe is me, that my sojourn is prolonged ! " She died after two novenas made in honor of the Blessed Virgin, to obtain her deliverance. After finishing these pious exercises, as she was still in the same state of suffering, she was heard to say : " Although I have prayed well, good Mother, " nothing has yet come of it ! " The following night she fell suddenly ill and while the Sister who was watching with her ran for help, she gently breathed out her soul to Him who gave it.

Lucie Lecourtois,—in religion Sister M des Sept Douleurs,—still remained. After having seen her companions of the great day of profession precede

her into eternal life, it seemed to her that she too might well sing her "*Nunc dimittis.*" She had well earned her crown. Her life had been a hard one, if we can so qualify a life wherein every thing, —joy, sorrow, pleasure and pain,—had been imbued with a most tender devotion to the Mother of God. Though weighed down by the infirmities of age, she would crawl to the foot of Mary's Altar, and spend the greater part of her time in sweet converse with her Blessed Mother. Her soul took its flight for the eternal hills on the feast of the Purity of the Blessed Virgin, October 16th, 1892. She was then eighty-two years of age. She had always desired and asked for the grace of dying on a feast of the Blessed Virgin.

In the year 1895, Mother M. de la Miséricorde,— who as we have already seen, governed the Community from 1866 to 1872,—succeeded Mother M. du Sacré-Cœur de Jésus, as Superior-general.—In the interval, she had occupied important posts at Montreal, and since 1889 she had most successfully directed the New-York House. The building of the Infant Asylum—of which we shall speak later on,—and the enlargment and restoration of the Chapel, will stand as the principal works of her administration.

Even with the galleries where the Magdalenes

and penitents were accommodated, the Chapel had become too small for the ever increasing number of inmates, and the Sisters soon saw the necessity of enlarging it, or closing the doors to the large number of seculars who crowded in to attend divine worship. The wall at the back of the sanctuary was thrown down, and behind the altar was built a second Chapel which is an extension of the former one and equals it in size. These two Chapels constitute but one, in reality, and form a quadrilateral 180 feet in length. At equal distances from each end, the ceiling, slightly arched on each side, is rounded into a cupola. Underneath it rises a Roman altar, in the center of a circular sanctuary surrounded by a railing. The old nave, which opens on Dorchester Street, is still set apart for the use of seculars, and the new one is reserved for the Religious, who are thus, as it is proper, more completely separated from the world.

The great work of Mother M. de la Miséricorde's second administration, was the erection of a Chapel which not only meets a long felt need of her Community, but which also, in this year of golden jubilee, rises Heavenwards as a manifestation of gratitude for half a century of protection and benefits.

On the granite porch of the Chapel which is now being built, no human name will be engraved, for it is the house of God; but the friends of "La Misé-

" ricorde " will manage to read thereon the names of Rev. Canon Leclerc and Rev. M. Charpentier,—the latter of whom has for nearly nine years, placed at the service of the inmates of the Convent all the devotedness of his priestly heart, and the other, in his capacity as ecclesiastical Superior watches over, and directs by his wisdom and experience all the undertakings and progress of the Community.

CHAPTER V

Magdalenes—Consecrated girls—Penitents—Children.

Conversa est retrorsum et vidit Jesum stantem... conversa illa dicit ei: Rabboni (quod dicitur Magister) (JOAN. XX. 14-16).
She turned herself back and saw Jesus standing.... she turning saith to Him: Rabboni! (which is to say Master).

BEFORE finishing this history, it will doubtless be of interest to cast a glance at some of the verdant boughs which have sprung from the trunk of this tree of charity. Some of them have already been mentioned, but we could not have given a description of them without interrupting the course of our narrative.

During the first years of the Community, there were only two classes of persons in the house:—the devoted Directresses of the work, who were soon to become Religious; and the unfortunate creatures who were the objects of their charity, and who

were called the Penitents. Thanks to the zeal and self-denial of the former, and above all to the blessing of Heaven, several of the penitents were inspired with the idea, which soon became the desire, of dwelling far from the world on the new shore where their souls breathed an atmosphere so fortifying and so pure.—The house was then too small to enable the Sisters to entertain their request. Those who were most persistent in pleading for admission found safety and the means of leading a blameless life, behind the grating of the Good-Shepherd Convent, established at Montreal in 1844. But the happy contagion increased, cases became more numerous from year to year, and the Sisters saw they could no longer resist what seemed to be the will of God. Successive enlargements of the buildings had been made in proportion to the needs of the work. In 1859, it was found possible to open a class for those penitents who desired to remain in the house and persevere in the life of expiation and reparation they had entered upon. Their model and patroness was easily found in the Gospel. What more salutary and consoling example could be proposed to their imitation than Mary Magdalene, canonized by the words of our Saviour himself: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath "loved much."

Thus was founded, under the name of "Magda-
" lenes," a secondary order recruited among the penitents. Its members were at first allowed to take annual vows, and a few years later, in 1866, to bind themselves to God for life. They were seven in number in 1859, when Bishop Bourget consecrated their foundation as a religious order, by his authority, and gave them a Rule to follow.—This number rapidly increased and one of Mother M. de la Miséricorde's first acts as Superior was, as we have seen, to separate the professed Magdalenes from the novices; since that time, about 1866, their novitiate has always formed a kind of separate Community. —The room where the novices unite for their recreations and spiritual exercises, is called the Magdalum and the room of the professed, St. Baume.

The end aimed at by the Magdalene Sisters is
" to honor the infinite mercy of Our Lord Jesus
" Christ and the tender compassion of His Blessed
" Mother for the greatest of sinners, by devoting
" themselves to works of penance, under the pro-
" tection of Mary Magdalene, whom they desire to
" reproduce in themselves, by the faithful imitation
" of her virtues." This we read in their Constitutions in the very handwriting of Bishop Bourget himself. Each Sister should reproduce in herself the mortified and penitential life of that holy friend

of Jesus, and as a continual reminder of that obligation, each and everyone of them is to bear the name of Magdalene prefixed to her religious name; and it is to be their "first and principal name." Their duties are all to be deduced from the contemplation of the model proposed to their generous efforts. "They should strive to conquer self and "destroy in their hearts all inordinate affections. "Their solitude will be like 'a battlefield whereon "they must fight until their last breath.'" They shall endeavor to realize in their hearts the heinousness of sin and the nothingness of earthly things. They must constantly bear in mind such maxims as will remind them of the emptiness of life and the world without God, and of the ineffable splendor and unspeakable happiness of the heavenly kingdom. In union with their holy protectress, they shall love to remain at the feet of Jesus, to weep over their past offences, and compassionate the cruel sufferings of their Saviour, listen to his tender words, and pour forth their hearts in acts of adoration and love.—In short they have the Rule laid down for them and the daily opportunities for the practice of virtue, which is facilitated by good example, to lead them, as it were by the hand, along the path of perfection.

What a consoling sight in the eyes of God and

His angels, is not this humble Community, wherein these poor flowers blighted and crushed by the world, begin to live and bloom once more in the full light of faith, under the vivifying breath of the Holy Spirit and the sweet dew of the Precious Blood. The world may look down with pity on those whose life passes in obscurity and silence, far from its noisy and pompous feasts; it may pity these souls who renounce its joys after having tasted, alas! their deadly poison; but the world does not know that in this enclosure, which appears so sad and gloomy, the air is purer, God and heaven are nearer; and what more is needed, even here below, to render life sweet and happy?

Among the penitents were some who trembled at the thought of being again launched on the stormy sea of the world, where their frail bark had already been wrecked, but who, nevertheless, felt no attraction towards the mode of life followed by the Magdalenes.—Must they, in spite of themselves, be sent out into a world where they see only pitfalls and precipices which, as new recruits under the standard of virtue, they naturally, anticipate with dread? And did not charity suggest that they be kept away from the scandals of the world, since it would be preserving them for God and virtue? There could be but one answer to the questions, and

this idea was the origin of the Preservation class or "Consecrated girls." In this class are placed former penitents who, under the influence and attraction of grace, remain in the Hospital to consecrate, (as their name implies) the remainder of their days to spiritual and corporal works of mercy.—Some of them remain all their lives in this class, but the majority, after a certain lapse of time, solicit admission to the Magdalene Novitiate. It must also be said that many among them, after persevering a year or two, return to the world. However, short though it be, their sojourn in the house contributes greatly to strengthen them in their good resolutions; and on their return into the midst of society their conduct, in most cases, affords the consoling spectacle of a regular and edifying life. The first Consecrated were received in 1859; since 1878, their number has varied from twenty to thirty.

Before 1866, the Sisters themselves, as we have seen, attended the sick penitents. This usage had been faithfully kept up and transmitted ever since the foundation. They had given up, it is true, visiting and attending the sick at their homes; but the work of attending the sick of the Hospital seemed to some of the Sisters to be closely connected with the vocation they had embraced; and the authority of Bishop Bourget and of Rome itself

were required to overcome the reluctance and pain with which they consented to give up that duty. Once the matter decided, it became necessary to procure nurses who, under the direction of a Sister, would bestow on the penitents the care and attendance which the religious were no longer allowed to give. By a happy and providential coincidence a pious widow, Madame Perras, mother of the Superior of that time, lived retired as a boarder in the Convent. Being accustomed to treating this kind of sickness in the world, she generously offered to instruct in the art a certain number of trustworthy women, on whom the Sisters could fully rely for the care of the sick penitents. In this way originated the group known as "Nurses," in the house, their number varying from ten to fifteen. The spirit with which they should be animated is clearly shown by the words of our Divine Saviour, on which they often meditate: "I was sick, and you "visited me." Having freely entered the Community, they discharge their duties with a degree of self-denial and devotedness that cannot be too highly praised. They are also instructed to carry-out to the letter the directions of the physicians, to use the greatest discretion with regard to those committed to their care, and take every possible precaution to secure the safety of the new-born infants.

The household also includes a group, few in number, however, known as "*Filles de confiance*" or Trusted maids, attached to the various departments of the house and enjoying the advantages of the religious life, without assuming its obligations. They are employed in the house, in various duties, with the religious, and receive no other salary for their services than their food, clothing and lodging; but they are glad to devote their lives to the work of God in this house, where they enjoy peace and retirement, and can more easily work out their eternal salvation far from the perils of the world.

There would still remain to be spoken of, those persons who are admitted into the Hospital under the name of penitents, as well as their children, had they not been already often referred to in the course of this history. It is well, however, to bear in mind that the end and aim of this Institution,—inspired by charity and religion—being to save not only the honor but also, and more especially, the souls of the unfortunates who find a refuge within its walls, it would be a mistake to look upon it as a mere hospital, to be entered to-day and left to-morrow. It is that without doubt, and even that of itself is a real charity; but there is something more. —Solicitude for the salvation of souls prevails over and absorbs all other considerations; it is the mani-

fest spirit of the rules laid-down for the penitents. Their very name "penitents" is a clear indication of the sentiments the Sisters strive to instill into the souls of these unfortunates. "They are to bear "in mind," says their rule, "that they have entered "this house in order to learn to know, to love and "to serve God, and begin an entirely new life." This is the great point:—to make them conceive the desire, adopt the resolution, make the attempt to lead a better life. For this end, a three days' retreat is given them as soon as possible after their admission into the house.—Amid silence, solitude and prayer, whereby their souls are as it were, made to stand alone and trembling before their God, they are enabled to reflect seriously over their past conduct, to fathom the depth of the abyss to which they were hurrying, and with the help of grace, conceive a salutary shame, which soon bears fruit in tears of repentance and the accents of sincere conversion: "*Surgam et ibo ad Patrem meum*..... "I will arise and go to my Father."

All are not in the same degree of need. Many of those admitted are unfortunate young creatures whom a moment of passion or sudden impulse has plunged into the abyss of shame, and who, in spite of their fall, have still retained the love of virtue. The Maternity offers a refuge against shame and

despair to these poor victims. Soon will they be able to return to their accustomed place in society, without dishonor for themselves or their families. Their sad experience will render them more circumspect and reserved in the future, and in some cases their misfortune imparts to the remainder of their life a degree of earnestness and gravity they would never have known otherwise.

Souls more familiar with vice, whether through ignorance, a bad education, or temptations against which no exterior vigilance has protected them, find in the religious instructions given them, in meditation on the last things and on the eternal truths, and in the example of virtue afforded by those with whom they have taken refuge, reasons for seeking a change of life, and an invitation to the practice of piety,—all of which, under the influence of grace, soon results in true conversions. On returning to their homes many become models of virtue; and their Pastors, touched by the happy transformation, write to the Sisters letters expressing profound and heartfelt gratitude. Some of the former penitents, in order not to forget the good resolutions taken at the Maternity, but to remain firm in the midst of the seductive snares for their virtue, write regularly to the Sisters, until the day, (and sometimes even after) when an honorable marriage puts an end to their struggles and dangers.

Open to the poor as well as to the rich, like the Divine Mercy itself, the Institution founded by Mother de la Nativité endeavors to insure to all alike the benefit of a life of holiness and reparation. Penitents whose means permit are allowed to enjoy the advantage of a private room, but they are not in any way exempt from the observance of the general rule. The greater part of the places are, however, reserved for the poor, for it was in the poor and humble class, it will be remembered, that the pious Foundress took most interest, as being, in her eyes, most worthy of pity.

As regards admission, no distinction is made between Catholics and Protestants. Charity opens her arms to all with equal tenderness, and if she has taught the Sisters to recall to the former their baptismal promises and the divine character with which their souls had been stamped for eternity, to the latter she makes them repeat our Divine Saviour's teachings and the conditions without which none can hope to enter the kingdom of heaven. Many of these poor girls, brought-up in the school of error, are touched by the kind and disinterested care lavished on them, and finish by opening their eyes to the true light and renouncing heresy.

Over eighty have thus made their abjuration since the foundation of the house. The greater part of

INFANTS' HOME AND CHAPEL (SISTERS' CHOIR).

these conversions were due to the impression made by the charity of the Sisters. Convinced that a Church which inspires its votaries with so much goodness, sincere devotedness and self-denial, can be neither bad nor false, these poor girls soon experience the desire of sharing in the religious belief of their benefactresses, ask for instruction, and ere long to join in their prayers, and finally, the grace of God finishes what the heart had begun.—Several of these converts have remained in the Community, in the quality of Magdalenes, to weep over their past life and give unceasing thanks to God for having called them to the true faith.

The children born at the Maternity were, immediately after Baptism, carried to the Grey Nunnery and received in the Foundling Asylum connected with the General Hospital. Things went on this way until about the year 1880. At that time the number of children having considerably increased, —it was nearly four hundred,—and the Grey Nuns receiving a large number from other sources, their asylum became too small, and they were obliged to confide a number of these poor little ones to nurses, to whom a small monthly allowance was given. This system was expensive, and the children did not always receive the care and attention their tender age required. On this account the Grey Nuns

resolved to receive in future only so many children as could be kept in their Asylum, and from that date they became more strict in their conditions for admission.—Finally, in the spring of 1889, they declared that they would no longer receive children born in the Maternity.

Being thus obliged to provide, themselves, for the rearing of the children, the Sisters improvised forthwith an Infant Asylum on the third floor of their Hospital, and readily accepted the new work laid upon them by Divine Providence. But it was evident that they had not sufficient room to carry on the work, and without additional space, many inconveniences and much suffering were inevitable. The Sisters themselves were long since accustomed to suffering of this kind, but the sufferings of the children must be prevented if possible. In short, the construction of a new Asylum was resolved upon, and no time was lost in beginning the work. The edifice is now nearly completed.—It extends from East to West in rear of the Mother-house, and measures 185 feet in length. The western end is joined to the Maternity and the eastern to the Chapel. It is a vast and imposing four-story building, fire-proof, well ventilated and lighted, and laid-out with the greatest care. The first story is devoted to the laundry, drying-room, shoe-shop, &c., and

replaces the former "Workshops." The second contains, besides the ironing-room and children's linen-room, several apartments for the class of Consecrated girls. The third and the fourth are destined for the children's wards, infirmaries, nurses' rooms, bath and operating-rooms, &c.—In a word, the work thus undertaken is entirely new and highly important. It will be remembered that the germ of this undertaking was embodied in the idea of the work as conceived by Mother de la Nativité. Did she not say to her Sisters: "The children will "one day be your crown in heaven?" It is manifest that while this work involves a great increase of labor and expense, it will also be the source of fresh and abundant blessings. On receiving each new-born infant confided to their care, the daughters of Mother de la Nativité will hear the voice of God whispering softly, as an encouragement and a promise, these words of Pharaoh's daughter, confiding the infant Moses to the unknown mother of the child "saved from the water:" "Receive this "child and nourish it for me; and I will reward "thee for it."

CHAPTER VI

Virtues of Mother de la Nativité.

Venite, audite et narrabo, omnes qui timetis Deum, quanta fecit animæ meæ (Ps. LXV. 16).
Come and hear all ye that fear God; and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul.

THIS history would remain incomplete, if after having narrated the life of Mother de la Nativité, the birth and progress of her work, we considered the object of her career accomplished and our task completed. The persons for whom this book is written ask us for more than this. Their piety would fain commune with the truly pious soul, with the tender and most loving heart of Mother de la Nativité. May the Virgin Mary enable us to gratify their legitimate desire.

God alone, it is true, can penetrate into the inmost recesses of a soul and contemplate all the generosity and love hidden therein. The eye of man

which sees but the exterior need never hope to fathom its depths, often illuminated by rays of light from above. But he need not complain, because he can judge only by the exterior—by works and words—for "Out of the abundance of the heart, "the mouth speaketh" and often some one word or action throws a flood of light on the inner life of the soul.

1st.—Love of God.

If we consider Mother de la Nativité's life as a whole, if we consider its leading features, the first thing to strike us is her devotedness, her tenderness, her compassion for the unfortunate. Even when a child, she opened her heart to temporal miseries; later on, corporal necessities were not excluded from her charity, but she extended it also to spiritual miseries, in order to relieve and remedy them, and sometimes, with God's help, "where sin "abounded," prepare a place for superabundant grace.

Such devotedness cannot exist without a great love of God; for He alone can raise the soul above this world and render it capable of performing the acts of self-denial, and self-devotion, and calm and persevering heroism we admire in this noble life. "The noble love of Jesus impelleth us to do great "things," says the author of the Following of

Christ. "Love feeleth no burden; when weary it "is not tired; when frightened is not disturbed; "but like a vivid flame and a burning torch, it "mounteth upwards, and securely passeth through "all." "Whosoever is not ready to suffer all things "and to stand resigned to the will of his Beloved, "is not worthy to be called a lover." By these exterior marks, it was easy to know that the glowing embers of divine charity burned in this venerable Mother's soul. She nourished that sacred flame by means of a strong and tender devotion towards the Holy Eucharist. None rejoiced more heartily than Mother de la Nativité on the day when Bishop Bourget, yielding at last to the entreaties of his daughters, granted them the inestimable privilege of possessing the Blessed Sacrament in their Chapel. The house was then located on St. André Street. The Divine Master's temple was small and poor, but what did it matter, when He was there! And these drawbacks would not detract from the fervor of their love and adoration. Mother de la Nativité spent whole hours kneeling at the feet of her Saviour. The moment her occupations left her any spare time, she would quietly retire to the Chapel; and there, immovable, her eyes fixed on the tabernacle, insensible to all that was going on around her, completely absorbed in her sweet vision, her

soul tasted the happiness of divine love. One of the greatest trials of her long illness was, that she was deprived of these visits, the source of her strength and consolation.

We can easily imagine what pure delights flooded her soul when she received Holy Communion. In a note on this venerable Foundress we read that: "Whenever communion was announced her heart "was filled with pure joy, and from her face seemed "to shine forth a ray of that heavenly fire with "which her soul was inflamed." On such days she was more absorbed in peace and fervent recollection. What passed between her and her Saviour; what communications she received from her Beloved during her long and fervent thanks-givings, none will ever know. She scrupulously hid all that concerned herself from human eyes, and never divulged the secrets of grace. At times, however, her heart overflowed with love and she smilingly said: "What "a grand visit I received this morning!" Her face was then illuminated with satisfaction and joy. When she was deprived of holy communion by illness or otherwise, she was deeply afflicted.

Her only consolation at such times was the thought that it was the will of God. That was her true source of strength. For, to please God, she would have suffered anything. It will be remem-

bered that Bishop Bourget, in seeking to overcome her difficulty in undertaking the foundation of the work, had only to say these words : " God wills it." Faithful in considering all events as directed by God, she overcame her natural repugnance and remained indifferent, though not insensible, to all the painful and humiliating reverses which constantly beset her life. She strove in every way to infuse this disposition, which is the fruit of the love of God, into the souls and hearts of her Sisters, knowing it to be the shortest if not the only way to happiness and peace, amid the ceaseless trials of this life. Presiding at the breakfast-table, one day, when there was very little to eat on the table, she said to the assembled Sisters : " My daughters, let " us make the will of God our nourishment," recalling to mind the words of our Saviour to His disciples by Jacob's well : " My meat is to do the will of " Him that sent me."

How many times, during the early struggles of the work, when on all sides, insults, slander, disdain, contempt and abandonment were showered on the new Order, did she not arouse the courage of her daughters by these words : " My dear Sisters, let " us bless the adorable will of God ! " Sustained by that spirit of love and faith in her God and Father, she was to taste with her Saviour the bitter-

ness of Gethsemani, and repeat with entire resignation in the midst of her sufferings: "Father, Thy "will, not mine be done."

Another proof of her love of God was the attraction she felt for prayer. Some of the Sisters, faithful witnesses of her daily life, said that she never ceased praying, even during work. Her soul felt the need of being united to its Creator. When she prayed aloud, a sweet and penetrating unction seemed to flow from her lips, and stimulated the piety of the least fervent heart. What can be said of her practice of meditation? It was her favorite exercise, and she often spent in mental prayer a longer time than the rule prescribed. It was said of her that: "She spoke little, but prayed and "meditated a great deal."

She united spiritual reading, which is the food of the soul, to prayer. Next to the Gospel and the Epistles, of which she every day read a passage, she preferred in a special manner the "Following of "Christ," "the most beautiful book written by man," and the "Lives of the Fathers of the Desert." Her piety enabled her to see God behind the veil of words; and in this way these spiritual lectures became a celestial and strengthening manna for her soul.

After having nourished her soul, they became

the subject of her conversations. The Sisters loved to hear her, during recreation time, relate the lives of the "Solitaries of Thebaïd;" falling from her lips they seemed to have new charms. The moral drawn corresponded so well with the original and charming story, that her companions were always eager to hear her and urge her on. "We are far "from loving God as these holy Fathers did," she would say; "what great works of penance they "performed to atone for their faults! What heroic "virtues they practised! In very truth, dear Sisters, "if we now sacrifice something for God, we shall "one day rejoice for having done it." Passing then quite naturally, from the life of the Saints to that of her Sisters, she would sum up the graces with which the Community had been favored since its foundation; and filled with deep gratitude for it all, she would exclaim: "How good God is!" "How good God is!" and beg Him, in conclusion to sanctify the Community and to render all its members agreeable in His eyes.

The yearly retreat was for Mother de la Nativité a precious opportunity of renewing her fervor, and no one rejoiced more than she when the time drew near to make it. Bishop Bourget, with unwearied zeal and devotedness, had himself preached several of these retreats, which thus brought double happi-

ness to the pious Foundress ; for she venerated her Bishop as she would a Saint. Hence these blessed days were to her, we may well believe, a source of immense benefit and increase in charity. During the last few years of her life, she was deprived of the benefit of the sermons and instructions addressed to the Community ; but sometimes the preacher would kindly give her a summary of the subject matter of his discourse to the Sisters. At the close of a retreat preached by Bishop Larocque (1), since Bishop of St. Hyacinth, the Superior told him that all the Sisters had made it excepting Mother de la Nativité. —" Do not worry about that," replied His Lordship, " your Mother has made an excellent retreat, she " has followed all the exercises, and I myself heard " her confession."

Mother de la Nativité loved the house of God no less than she loved His word.—Great was her joy when, after long years of waiting, the Sisters were able to build a sanctuary not wholly unworthy of the Divine Majesty. Up to that time, they could offer the King of Angels but an humble shelter, only too much like the stable of Bethlehem in its littleness and poverty. Mother de la Nativité had,

(1) Joseph Larocque, (1808-1887), born at Chambly, ordained in 1835. After having filled several positions in the diocese of Montreal, he was consecrated Bishop of Cydonia and coadjutor of Bishop Bourget, in 1852. Transferred to the See of St. Hyacinth in 1860, resigned in 1865, died November 18th, 1887.

however, invariably caused it to be kept bright with the gold of cleanliness. It was a sight most pleasing to watch her, with her own hands, cleaning the candlesticks and dusting the poor little Chapel. One day when a young Sister offered to take her place at this work, Mother foundress thanked her for her kind offer, but would not consent to be deprived of what she termed her "pearls." "You will also have "pearls, my dear child, when your turn comes," said she.

Through the same pious motive, she manifested the deepest respect and boundless confidence towards the Pastors of the Church. She suffered no one to speak depreciatingly of them in her presence, even in ever so trifling a matter.—"A Sister of "Miséricorde," she often said, "should never utter "complaints against a priest." She prayed for the Clergy, and frequently begged of God to raise up holy priests for his Church.

The persecutions which the Sovereign Pontiff had then to endure, sorely afflicted her heart; she heartily compassionated his sufferings, and prayed without ceasing for the exaltation of our Holy Mother the Church.—Some one having given her a picture of Pius the Ninth set in a gilt frame, she hung it up in her own poor cell. Shortly afterwards the Bishop came to visit her, and remarked that the

picture-frame was perhaps somewhat of a luxury!—"It is none too nice for the Holy Father," she quickly replied.—Thus did she voice her piety, and reverence for the Holy Father, but the spirit of poverty had its turn next and triumphed of course:—the gilt frame was sacrificed.

2nd.—Charity towards her neighbor.

True love of God cannot exist without a cordial love of our fellow-creatures. The Apostle St. John writes: "And this commandment we have from "God: that he who loveth God, love also his "brother (1)," and elsewhere he says: "Whosoever "is not just is not of God, nor he that loveth not "his brother (2)." It may be asserted without fear of error, that the distinctive mark and touch-stone of the true love of God, is love for our neighbor. We have already seen how Mother de la Nativité cherished that virtue from her childhood. It was the motive power of her whole life and the principle of her vocation. In her religious life it attained a marvellous growth, or rather, it took hold of all the faculties of her soul. Hence no one ever saw even the shadow of failing in her conduct, in regard to this virtue. Charity had become, as it were, a part of her being.

(1) 1 St. John, IV-21.
(2) 1 St. John, III-10.

The evidence of all the Sisters who shared her life and labors for years, agrees perfectly on this point, and they all say she was never heard to pronounce a word that could throw the slightest shadow over her neighbor's reputation. She sometimes endured from seculars unmerited blame and even atrocious insult, but never in replying did she show the smallest sign of ill-will or bitterness.

She was most skilful in turning aside uncharitable conversation, and if one of the Sisters happened to indulge in light banter or raillery during recreation, she immediately excused her with charity, saying: "Our Sister has made a mistake to-day, who knows "but it will be our turn to-morrow!" She could not bear tale-telling, which always has the sad effect of disuniting hearts and causing a coolness, and she always mildly reprehended any of the Religious who failed in that respect.—"The more united we "are," she would say to them, "the more good we "shall do to our penitents." She suffered greatly when any one showed a want of charity at the exercise of mutual correction. "When shall we be "truly charitable?" she exclaimed. "Oh! if I have "any power before God after He has called me "from this world, I will ask Him that this duty "especially, may be performed with charity."

The goodness of her heart shone forth especially

towards those of the Community who were in affliction.—She seemed to have received from God a singular gift for alleviating suffering, quieting fears and uneasiness, and restoring peace and serenity to troubled souls. The Sisters opened their hearts to their beloved Foundress with perfect confidence, knowing how much she sympathized with them, and what grace God had given her for consoling and strengthening them. After they had heard her, with that impressive and persuasive unction, the fruit of her close union with God, set forth how much suffering increases our merit, how effectually it tends to develop and strengthen virtue, how precious it is in the sight of God and how salutary, through the blessings it brings with it for one's self and for the whole Community, they found their hearts filled with the sweet spirit of resignation and courage to accept tribulations.

She had a kind of predilection for the novices, in whom she saw the hope and the future of the Community, and she was fond of conversing with them. She was perfectly at ease with her " children ; " and she had only to let her own heart speak, in order to instruct and form them. On various occasions she was called upon to address and instruct them ; and she performed her task with so much ardor and application, that she often, without perceiving

it, exceeded the time allotted to the exercise. The novices who had the happiness of listening to her (several of them are living still) love to re-call to mind those vivid instructions, wherein they saw, as in a mirror, the whole soul of their Mother.

The penitents had a like share in her affection. She loved them all the more in view of their pitiable condition. "We are Sisters of Mercy," she said, "chiefly for the most miserable, and we should show "the greatest kindness to those who are the most "incorrigible."—Nothing pained her so much as the dire necessity which sometimes compelled the house to refuse admission to some poor girl, for want of room or some other reason. — "We ought to "take in these unfortunate children," she would say, "the house is for them. God will provide for "their needs, and we should deprive ourselves in "some way, sooner than refuse them." She herself practised faithfully what she taught.—We have already seen that more than once she gave up her own bed to the penitents. This she did repeatedly even after her religious profession. One of her companions relates that she saw her once deprive herself of her bed in favor of a poor girl for whom no other bed could be found. Mother de la Nativité often urged upon the Mistress of Novices the necessity of cultivating a love for the penitents in the

hearts of the future Religious; and whenever she had an opportunity of addressing them herself, she insisted strongly on that point. "A Sister of Misé-" ricorde," she said to them, "should sacrifice her " life and strength, and even be ready to die, for the " penitents." She even went the length of saying: " Do not remain here, if you do not love the pen-" itents.—We must pray for them, help them in all " possible ways,—take the very bread from our " own mouths to give it to them, if necessary." " We ourselves can manage not to die of hunger, " but these poor children might suffer."

The good Mother's heart could not bear to see those around her in suffering, and especially her " dear penitents." She desired that they should be spared all trouble, for she considered their position painful enough in itself, without anything being done to make it worse, even in such small matters as a lack of attention or care. She was greatly displeased when she saw anyone so act: " It grieves me personally," she said, " for I carry " the penitents in my heart." She called them, " the treasures, the jewels of the house." At other times she would say: " The penitents are my heart, " and if it were the will of God, I would not hesitate " to begin over again, for their salvation, a life still " more painful and laborious."

These words were simply a faithful echo of her feelings in regard to these unfortunates. This was easily seen when she was in charge of the Hospital of St. Pelagia. What motherly solicitude and forethought! What tenderness in her relations with them! How great her fear of wounding them by word or deed! During the winter she herself rose early in the morning to light the fire, so that the penitents might not suffer from the cold on rising. The building they lived in was separated from the Community by the whole length of the garden, and the path to it was often filled with snow on a winter's morning. Long before daylight Mother de la Nativité was up and at work cleaning out the path with a shovel and a broom, so that her dear penitents might go to the Chapel to hear Mass, without danger of wetting their feet.

The venerable Foundress was never more at her ease than when with her penitents. "God treats "me like a spoiled child," she sometimes said.— "He inspires my Superiors to place me where I like "best to be, that is with my dear children." She was most sympathetic and affectionate in her dealings with these unfortunates; she easily won their confidence and their affection, and as a consequence had a great deal of influence for good over them. One of these girls, who became a Magdalene later

on, writes: "I was very wayward and committed " a great many faults; I shunned the good Mother's " company, but she used to seek me out and " remonstrate with me, not with severe reproaches, " but with kind words, saying that I would become " a good girl, that after all, my faults were not so " serious; that she herself, without the grace of " God, would commit more grievous ones, and that " many Saints had been greater sinners than I." Further on she says: "I was then a Protestant, " and the dear Mother's prayers and good example " were in great part the means of my conversion."

When Mother de la Nativité had won a penitent's heart, she endeavored to impart to her a true spirit of compunction; and while she liked to see her children gay and contented, she would not permit them to indulge in noisy or boisterous games. When she had to deal with individuals of a more worldly disposition, she gradually brought them round to better sentiments, and induced them to observe the rule, however hard it might seem to them, with the object in view of atoning for their past faults. Some of them tried her patience greatly by their intractable character and their whims. Far from showing irritation on such occasions, Mother de la Nativité always treated them with kindness and forbearance and patiently awaited the

action of grace on their rebellious hearts. "Since "God endures us with patience," she often said, "should we not endure these poor creatures in the "same way? In a single instant, we might fall "lower than they."

Words cannot do justice to the impression that so much amenity and devotedness produced. Many of the penitents were so deeply moved that they conceived the idea of remaining in the house to do penance.—This was the origin of the Community of Magdalenes as we have already stated.

Mother de la Nativité's charity was also extended, as will readily be believed, to the new-born infants.—As long as her strength permitted her to do so, she took pleasure in carrying them to the Church of Notre Dame for baptism. After the ceremony, she was in the habit of offering them to the Blessed Virgin and asking her to take them out of the world, if they were one day to sully their baptismal robe of innocence. "These little ones," said she, "will one day be the Sisters' crown in Heaven."

3rd.—Humility—Poverty—Mortification.

Love of God and our neighbor cannot flourish in a soul, without a great fund of abnegation, self-contempt, and humility. Hence it is that our Divine Saviour says to those who wish to follow Him, that

they must first learn to deny themselves. A soul will vainly strive to love God, if she does not begin by forsaking herself: her efforts will be fruitless, and her love illusory.—"Let me know Thee, Lord," exclaimed St. Augustine, "and let me know myself: "let me know Thee to love Thee, and let me know "myself to despise myself." "Then only," the illustrious Father of the Church seems to say, "then "only shall I love Thee as Thou art worthy of "being loved, when I shall have understood Thy "greatness and my own nothingness."

Mother de la Nativité had begun to lay this indispensable foundation or condition of charity,—which is humility,—in her childhood.—We have already seen how she always cherished the hidden life. But God specially loves that virtue, doubtless because it will one day serve to manifest more fully His glory, since He has said that those who humble themselves shall be exalted; and in order to promote the growth and increase of that holy virtue in the heart of His faithful servant, He permitted her to be strangely humiliated.

After having twice refused the office of Superior, Mother de la Nativité sought only to be classed with the rest of the Sisters and treated as the least among them. When any of the more attentive Sisters eagerly sought to render her some humble

service, in a moment of need, she would gently chide them, saying: "I am the servant of the Lord, and "I should not be served by His members." Her great wish was to be unknown and esteemed as nothing. A life of obscurity and oblivion was her choice. She had given it up with great regret in obedience to her Bishop, and as soon as she could do so without sinning against her duty, she joyfully returned, or rather threw herself headlong into this blessed life of obscurity.

God makes all things work together for the sanctification of those predestined to glory, and this alone explains the neglect and indifference, nay, even the disdain and aversion, the humble Foundress sometimes encountered. She was treated as the least of the Sisters, without the consideration or respect due to her age and the services she had rendered the Community: she drank often and deeply of that cup of sorrow—which for the Saints is true delight —the delight, namely, of being accounted as nothing and suffering at the hands of those she most dearly loved. Even her right to the title of Foundress was at one time contested, and soon it was refused to her.—Nothing short of the Bishop's intervention sufficed, as we have stated, to cause it to be restored. In the midst of these affronts, which sometimes bordered on insult, Mother de la Nativité always

remained meek and undisturbed. To hear her talk, one would think she deserved just such treatment. The greater part of the Religious, nevertheless, venerated her as their Mother, in spite of all that was said or done, and when one of them compassionated her sufferings, Mother de la Nativité would smile sweetly, as much as to say, " You pity me on account " of what makes me truly happy, and what is per- " haps my strongest claim before God." As to her title of Foundress, she would not have lifted her hand or made the smallest effort to retain it. " What difference does that make," she said, " I " was only the instrument ; it was the Bishop who " did everything."

When her infirmities no longer allowed her to attend the Chapter, she was set aside completely and lived an entire stranger to all that was going on in the house. Far from being displeased or grieved by this neglect, she rejoiced at it, for it gave her more liberty to give up her mind and her heart to God. She dreaded for herself any prominent office, and her humility made her shudder at the thought of becoming Superior. She often said : " The ruin of worldly people is love of riches and " independance ; but for us, Religious, it is pride " and self-love." Hence her daily and ceaseless struggle against that root of all evil.

When she was Assistant, she never presided over the Chapter of faults or mutual correction, until after she had first taken the lead in going through the ordeal herself. She sometimes carried her love of humiliation so far as to ask permission to perform works of penance imposed on others. When severely reprehended by the Superior for some involuntary fault, she never showed the least sign of annoyance, but always submitted humbly to whatever was prescribed. On one occasion it happened that a secular person, who often visited the Community on business, went so far as to address her in grossly insulting language. Mother de la Nativité answered not a word, and moreover, two days later, when the same person again called at the house, she received her with a serene countenance and kindly smile, as if nothing had happened.

Full of humility and contempt for herself, Mother de la Nativité also gave her Sisters an example of the practice of poverty, by contenting herself with what was strictly necessary, and of mortification, by retrenching something even from that. She never complained of wanting for anything. "If I had "remained in the world," she used to say, "I might "not have had what is given me here." It required but little, in truth, to supply her wants. This venerable Foundress always strove to economize the

Community's goods, for the benefit of the unfortunates who sought a shelter within its walls ; and after having worked unceasingly, and without ever wilfully losing a moment of time, she deemed herself unworthy of the poor food she received to sustain her strength : Such was always Mother de la Nativité. We must also mention that during her long illness, she was often deprived, on account of the great poverty of the house, of the diet and remedies that might have relieved her.

She manifested simplicity and the spirit of poverty in her clothing and other objects provided for her use, as she did in regard to her food. When, by her infirmities, she was obliged to remain in her room, a plain board served her as a table. In vain did the infirmarian try to replace it by a less primitive and rudimentary piece of furniture ; she succeeded at length in overcoming the good Mother's repugnance, only by representing that the board was not suitable to bear the Blessed Sacrament, on occasions when Holy Communion was administered to her. Extreme poverty, which excludes neither care nor neatness, was ever the sole ornament of her dress. Even when living in the world, she never cared for dress, and on becoming the Spouse of Jesus-Christ, she also embraced the poverty that surrounded our Divine Saviour from Bethlehem to

Calvary. She never at any time had more than one habit. When it was worn out, she could not be prevailed upon to accept a new one, but would make another out of material which had already been in use.

One of the Sisters desiring to dress her in a more becoming manner, on a particular occasion, was obliged to borrow a cape and other parts of the dress from the Sisters.—Her shoes were entirely worn out, but she would manage to hide them lest she should be given new ones. When she died, she had but one old dress, entirely worn out, which was used to bury her in. Blessed indeed was her poverty, which doubtless earned for her more glory in Heaven, than she could have attained with all the riches of earth !

4th.—Regularity.—Obedience.

One of the principal virtues required in a member of a Community is regularity. Fervor cannot long be maintained without this faithful observance of the rules, fatal relaxation slips in by degrees where order first reigned ; and failing the application of prompt and energetic remedies, individual perfection is likely to be abandoned, and the good aimed at by the Community is seriously compromised. Hence the founders of religious Orders, who were often

indulgent in other respects, were inflexible in regard to the Rule. They knew that the slightest infringement of it is often followed by grievous or even fatal consequences. God had imparted the same convictions to Mother de la Nativité, and she was herself a living embodiment of the Rule.

Even before the Rule was formally written out, she observed it with a punctuality which was never for one moment relaxed. "We should observe the "Rule," she said, "although it is not as yet wholly "written out and several points have been only "recommended orally; for if we do not now put in "practice what we know to be the Rule, how shall "we be able to do so later on, when our Rules are "completed?" Nothing grieved her more than to see any of the Sisters neglectful in regard to the Rule, and her firm rebuke in such cases, was in striking contrast with her mild and indulgent character. She was herself a living example, which it was not possible to resist. "Our dear Mother was "so regular," relates a Sister, "that she would "leave unfinished a stitch already begun, in order to "obey the first stroke of the bell; and when some "one spoke of her scrupulous regularity, she replied: "'God calls us by the voice of the bell, and we "should obey Him promptly.'" Sometimes the Sisters teased her laughingly about her great exact-

ness, which made her keep account of every minute, nay every instant of time.—" 'Tis true," answered the good Mother, " a minute is nothing, but one " minute added to other minutes will make several " hours, at the end of the year." Thus acting ever in the light of faith, she was always the first at her post in all the religious exercises of the Community, in obedience to the voice of God.

She was long entrusted with the duty of ringing the bell for the various exercises, an office for which she was admirably well adapted, although it must have cost her many a sacrifice —As she had neither watch nor alarm-clock, she was obliged to make her way through several rooms to look at the clock, and practise constant vigilance, so as not to ring too late or too early. After awakening the Community, she had to cross the garden in order to awaken the Novices, who slept in a separate building, and this in all weather, amid the deep snows and icy north wind of our Canadian winter. This habit of regularity was stronger than the infirmities of nature : when her limbs began to get stiff and heavy, Mother de la Nativité would make an earlier start, so as to arrive in good time for the exercises of the Community. She was sometimes obliged to make really superhuman efforts in order to accomplish her duty. —One day, when going to the refectory, she fell

fainting to the floor, and was found by the Sisters in that condition. And often in the morning on arising, she was so weak that she could scarcely stand. The Sisters, seeing her so feeble and exhausted, would urge her to remain in bed; "No, my chil-
" dren," she would reply, "I shall be longer lying
" down than standing; let me work as long as I
" can." At other times she said: "I must do
" something to win souls to God."

There was, however, nothing unbending or rigid in her way of understanding the Rule.—She was faithful in observing the letter, but she also knew how to interpret the spirit underlying it. No one could be, at one and the same time, more attached to the rule, and more easily induced to surrender it when charity required. She never hesitated a moment to break silence, when a young Sister was in need of advice or help of any kind; for she well knew that far above all special rules is the great universal rule of Charity, in accordance with these words of St. Augustine: "Love and do what thou willest."

The observance of the Rule has the happy effect of making those who observe it love not only the Rule itself, but also the Community and all that interests it. Such is the happy experience of all religious souls, and Mother de la Nativité was no exception to the rule.—" I have never been happier

" than since the day I entered religion," she oftentimes said ; " yes, everything about me is pleasant " to my eyes, and I love even the very walls that " separate me from the world."—To the young Sisters she would say : " Be not of those Religious who find " life dreary and lonesome in the Community. The " religious habit should speak to your heart and help " you to bear joyfully the crosses that Divine Prov- " idence sends you." During the early years following the foundation, some of the Sisters were inclined to get discouraged on account of their poverty and the other difficulties to be met with ; but the calm serenity and confidence in God manifested by their Foundress re-assured the timid : " The devil is " doing all in his power to prevent us from doing " good," she would say to them ; " but never mind " him, keep on praying, be good and obedient, and " these difficulties will disappear and the house will " prosper." As these financial difficulties might have been an inducement to facilitate the admission of novices belonging to rich families, she said to her Sisters again and again : " Do not receive the " novices on account of their wealth ; for a poor " subject endowed with a proper spirit, is better " than a subject endowed with wealth and void of " the religious spirit."

Such being the sentiments of Mother de la Nati-

vité, we need not be surprised to learn that she herself was most respectful and submissive to her Superiors in every way. The profound veneration in which she held her Bishop is well known to our reader. His slightest desires were sacred laws to her, and she made it her duty never to transgress them. All her other Superiors, moreover, no matter who they might be, were sure to find her filled with the utmost deference and trusting submission in their regard. She made it a rule to close her eyes to their failings, and did all in her power to palliate and excuse their defects. To the novices she often said, "Even though you remark some "fault in your Superiors, that should never prevent "you from having recourse to them with a submis- "sive and open heart; it is a sign of a true vocation "to do so." "We should see God in our Superiors," she would often say, and she never liked to see any of the Sisters worry or busy themselves about matters relating to their Superiors. And again: "They "have the necessary grace for looking after things, "they receive light from above that is not given "us; we have enough to do to attend to our own "conduct." She always consented to whatever was decided in regard to herself, without uttering a word.

Already suffering from the diseases that confined

her to her room during the latter part of her life, she was given charge of the penitents one very severe winter. The building they occupied was separated from the Convent and very cold, for a sickly and aged person. Mother de la Nativité had a great deal to suffer, and yet, every morning, she made her way to the Community Chapel for mass, chilled through and nearly fainting. When some of the Sisters advised her to solicit a change of office, she replied, that one should not solicit anything contrary to holy obedience.

During her illness, she always obeyed the physicians' directions with childlike simplicity. The infirmarian had once received order to change her clothing at regular intervals; but when the time arrived, Mother de la Nativité was enduring such acute pain and was so weak, that the Sister hesitated and wanted to wait a while. "No, no," said the "Mother, "we must obey, and if I die in obeying, you "need have no uneasiness in regard to me." These admirable words throw more light on this favored soul, than any words of ours could possibly afford.

Another day, through some misunderstanding, the chaplain took Holy Communion to her, when she had not permission to receive. What should she do? Her love of obedience triumphed over her desire of uniting herself to the Divine Spouse of

souls; and with as much joy as she would have had in receiving Holy Communion, she informed the priest that she could not do so. We may well believe that Jesus, who was Himself obedient even unto the death of the Cross, did not leave his faithful servant without rewarding her amply for this admirable act of obedience.

For this pious Religious, obeying the rule, trusting herself to her Superiors, to be employed and treated according to their good pleasure, was one and the same thing as obeying and giving herself up to God. This was what she believed perfection to consist in; and her whole life may be resumed in these words: Accomplishment of God's will through love, and the sacrifice of her own taste, will and tranquillity.

All this was done in the most unassuming manner, and without pretension of any kind whatsoever. Everything about her was plain and simple, and she had a great horror of singular and extraordinary ways. She made it a point to differ in nothing from the others in her exterior; and her modest and recollected deportment spoke loudly of her closeness to God, in whose presence she constantly strove to abide.

A short description of her exterior, will complete the portrait of the pious Foundress. She was of

medium height and naturally robust, but her constitution had been undermined by labor and privations. Her features were not soft or regular, but taken as a whole, her face revealed an energetic and resolute soul. Her small, black eyes, bright as diamonds, seemed to read one to the very bottom of the soul, and you felt that she was a keen observer. Her large, half-opened mouth expressed great charity and kindness. She spoke but little, examined closely and judged with shrewd impartiality, the character of those with whom she had to deal.—Although she had received but little school education, she was remarkably polite in her manners, and her delicacy and prudent reserve made her a charming person to deal with. Her great grasp of memory, nourished by continual and serious reading, furnished her with a quantity of edifying and interesting stories that were a real treasure for the Sisters during recreation.

Let us add, to finish this incomplete portrait of the venerable Foundress, that although naturally timid and retiring, she was also firm in all that regarded duty. More than once she would ask for time to reflect, at a capitular council, and after having once decided according to her conscience, she never changed her mind.

L. J. C.

NEW YORK MOTHERS' HOME OF THE SISTERS OF MISERICORDE,
Nos. 523 to 537 E. 86th Street, between East Boulevard and East End Avenue

APPENDIX

ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS

OF THE

COMMUNITY,

FROM ITS FOUNDATION UP TO THE PRESENT DAY.

1st Rt. Rev. Ignace Bourget, Bp. of Montreal.

2nd Rt. Rev. Joseph LaRocque, coadjutor Bishop of Montreal.

3rd Very Rev. A. F. Truteau, V. G.

4th Rev. J. Octave Paré, Canon.

5th Rev. Etienne Hicks, Canon.

6th Rev. Godefroi Lamarche, Canon.

7th Rev. Joseph Séguin, Canon.

8th Rev. P. E. Lussier, Canon.

9th Most Rev. E. C. Fabre, Archbishop of Montreal.

10th Rev. T. F. Kavanagh.

11th Rev. J. U. Leclerc, Honorary Canon.

CHAPLAINS

1st	Rev. Antoine Rey, 1846.
2nd	Rev. Father L. C. Saché, S.J., 1847.
3rd	Rev. Venant Pilon, Canon, 1847-1860.
4th	Rev. J. O. Paré, Canon, 1860-1862.
5th	Rev. G. Lamarche, Canon, 1862-1864.
6th	Rev. E. Hicks, Canon, 1864.
7th	Rev. G. Huberdeau, 1864-1866.
8th	Rev. C. Martin, 1866-1870.
9th	Rev. J. A. Martineau, 1870-1871.
10th	Rev. Z. Delinelle, 1871-1874.
11th	Rev. L. H. Paré, 1874-1877.
12th	Rev. J. M. A. Brien, 1877-1889.
13th	Rev. N. A. Dugas, 1889.
14th	Rev. M. H. Charpentier, since 1889.

GENERAL SUPERIORS

1st Mother St. Jeanne de Chantal, 1848-1863.

2nd Mother St. Joseph, 1863-1866.

3rd Mother M. de la Miséricorde, 1866-1872.

4th Mother St. Rose de Lima, 1872-1877.

5th Mother St. Thérèse de Jesus, 1877-1883.

6th Mother St. Zotique, 1883-1889.

7th Mother M. du Sacré Cœur de Jésus, 1889-1895.

8th Mother M. de la Miséricorde, since 1895.

Names of the Professed-Sisters of Miséricorde since the Foundation of the Institution.

No	RELIGIOUS NAMES.	Family-names.	Birth-place.	Birth.	Entry.	Profession.	Decease.
1	Mother de la Nativité.....	{Mme. J.-Marie Jetté née Rosalie Cadron}	Lavaltrie.....	Jan. 27, 1794	May 1, 1845	Jan. 16, 1848	April 5, 1864
2	Sr. St.-Jean-Chrysostôme..	{Mme. M. Raymond née S. Desmarêts}	Rivière-du-Loup..	Sept. 24, 1795	July 20, 1845	" " "	Feb. 20, 1853
3	Sr. St.-Béatrix.....	Lucie Benoit.....	Montreal.....	April 3, 1818	July 3, 1846	" " "	Feb. 5, 1879
4	Sr. St.-François-de-Sales ..	Marguerite Gagnon...	Montreal.....	Aug. 1, 1821	Sept. 16, 1846	" " "	.....
5	Sr. M.-des-Sept-Douleurs..	Lucie Lecourtois.....	L'Assomption....	Oct. 30, 1810	" " "	" " "	Oct. 16, 1892
6	Sr. St.-Jeanne-de Chantal .	{Mme. A. Galipeau née Josepte Malo}	Belœil	June 24, 1799	Sept. 17, 1846	" " "	April 23, 1876
7	Sr. St.-Joseph	Justine Filion.....	Terrebonne.....	July 31, 1802	Oct. 8, 1846	" " "	Mar. 10, 1890
8	Sr. St.-Marie-d'Egypte....	Adélaïde Lauzon.....	St.-Anne-des-Pla.	Nov. 6, 1825	Dec. 3, 1846	" " "	Nov. 8, 1890
9	Sr. M.-de-Bonsecours.....	Sophie Bibeau.....	St.-Martin.....	Mar. 11, 1811	Dec. 24, 1846	Jan. 14, 1849	Jan. 12, 1889
10	Sr. St.-Jean-l'Evangéliste..	Angélique Levesque...	St.-Jac.-de-l'Ach .	Sept. 20, 1804	Nov. 22, 1847	" " "	Dec. 5, 1867

11	Sr. St.-Antoine, Abbé.....	Marie Gauthier.....	Eboulements.....	Oct. 28, 1815	Aug. 3, 1847	Jan. 16, 1850	May 17, 1890
12	Sr. St.-Ignace	Lucie Thibault.....	St.-Jude	Nov. 7, 1822	June 1, 1849	Jan. 16, 1851	Nov. 20, 1883
13	Sr. St.-Agnès.....	Ezilda Pion.....	St.-Hilaire	Nov. 10, 1835	Mar. 18, 1852	Jan. 16, 1854	.....
14	Sr. St.-Louis-de-Gonzague .	Rosalie Diotte.....	St.-Marie.....	Aug. 26, 1830	Mar. 12, 1853	Jan. 16, 1855	....
15	Sr. Marie-du-Crucifix.....	Tharsile Bisson.....	Montreal.....	July 7, 1832	Nov. 20, 1853	" " "	.....
16	Sr. St.-Jean-Baptiste.....	Françoise Racette.....	Montreal.....	June 26, 1824	Nov. 14, 1854	Jan. 16, 1856	.....
17	Sr. M.-de-l'Im.-Conception	Victoire Lefèbvre.....	St.-Benoit.....	April 17, 1829	April 4, 1855	Jan. 18, 1857	July 16, 1882
18	Sr. Marie-des-SS.-Anges...	Flore Bertrand.....	S.-P.-les-Becquets	Nov. 13, 1836	July 3, 1855	" " "	.....
19	Sr. Marie-de-la-Visitation..	Aurélie Delorme.....	Terrebonne.....	June 22, 1819	July 7, 1855	" " "	Aug. 12, 1894
20	Sr. Marie-de-la-Miséricorde	Marie Perras.....	St.-Constant.....	Mar. 13, 1838	Sept. 10, 1855	" " "	.....
21	Sr. St.-Patrice.....	Mary-Ann Church....	Ireland.....	Aug. 24, 1823	Nov. 19, 1855	" " "	April 17, 1883
22	Sr. St.-Philomène.....	Angélique Boudreau ..	St.-Cyprien.....	Aug. 7, 1833	Mar. 26, 1856	Feb. 2, 1858	.....
23	Sr. St.-François-Xavier....	Henriette Bibeau.....	St.-Frs.-du-Lac ..	April 14, 1832	Aug. 23, 1856	" " "	Aug. 24, 1895
24	Sr. St.-Venant.....	Cléophée Gaulin.....	St.-Césaire.....	Dec. 4, 1836	Sept. 9, 1856	" " "	.....
25	Sr. St.-Thérèse-de-Jésus...	Domithilde Filiatrault	St.-Rose.....	Aug. 25, 1837	Nov. 19, 1856	" " "	.....
26	Sr. St.-Stanislas-Kostka...	Dorimène Auclair.....	St.-Hilaire	Aug. 25, 1841	Aug. 14, 1857	Feb. 2, 1859	.....

NAMES OF THE PROFESSED-SISTERS OF MISÉRICORDE SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTION.—*Cont.*

No.	RELIGIOUS-NAMES.	FAMILY-NAMES.	BIRTH-PLACE.	BIRTH.	ENTRY.	PROFESSION.	DECEASE.
27	Sr. St.-Anne.....	M.-Aurélie Baron.....	St.-Hyacinthe...	Oct. 3, 1836	April 30, 1857	Aug. 22, 1859	.....
28	Sr. St.-Cathérine-de-Sienne	Philomène Chapeleau..	St.-Rose.....	May 2, 1837	Dec. 2, 1857	Mar. 28, 1860	June 22, 1886
29	Sr. St.-Rose-de-Lima.....	Edesse Dufresne.....	St.-Aimé.....	April 14, 1837	Sept. 14, 1858	" " "	Mar. 30, 1877
30	Sr. St.-Euphrasie.....	Célina Pion.....	St.-Brigide.....	Nov. 27, 1843	Nov. 4, 1858	Feb. 10, 1861	.....
31	Sr. St.-Véronique-du-C....	Esther Desjardins.....	St.-Rose.....	Jan. 28, 1833	May 25, 1859	" " "	Feb. 23, 1867
32	Sr. St.-Olivier.....	Célina Piette-Trempe..	Berthier.....	April 29, 1841	Aug. 7, 1860	Feb. 2, 1862	Feb. 15, 1898
33	Sr. St.-Amélie.....	Clémence Touzin.....	Lanoraie.....	Nov. 2, 1843	Sept. 10, 1860	Sept. 24, 1862	Oct. 9, 1870
34	Sr. Marie-de-l'Enfant-Jésus	M.-Mathilde Gaboriau	St.-Bruno.....	Feb. 14, 1847	Oct. 2, 1860	" " "	.....
35	Sr. St.-Elizabeth.....	M.-Julie Hudon.....	Rivière-Ouelle....	April 5, 1824	Nov. 5, 1860	" " "	Aug. 29, 1893
36	Sr. St.-Angèle-Mérici.....	M.-Sophronie Bibeau..	St.-Frs.-du-Lac..	Jan. 17, 1843	Nov. 22, 1861	Feb. 27, 1864	.....

37	Sr. St.-Zotique.....	M.-Célina Nadeau....	St.-Césaire.....	June 22, 1845	July 31, 1863	Jan. 22, 1865	....
38	Sr. Marie-de-la-Nativité...	M.-Césarée Gaulin....	St.-Césaire.....	Sept. 24, 1841	Aug. 17, 1863	" " "	.....
39	Sr. Marie-de-la-Croix.....	Marie Paquin	Ile Bizard.....	Mar. 5, 1847	Jan. 23, 1864	Dec. 18, 1865	.....
40	Sr. St.-Jean-Chrysostôme..	M.-Eudosie Lussier...	Boucherville.....	Sept. 20, 1842	Feb. 20, 1864	" " "	May 26, 1894
41	Sr. St.-André.....	Joséphine Provençal ..	Château-Richer ..	Feb. 10, 1834	Nov. 13, 1862	" " "	Aug. 3, 1887
42	Sr. M.-du-S.-Cœur-de-Jésus	Anastasie Paquin.....	Ile Bizard.....	Aug. 19, 1850	July 23, 1864	Aug. 21, 1866	.....
43	Sr. St.-Pélagie.....	Eugénie Lemieux.....	St.-Constant.....	Sept. 11, 1851	May 7, 1866	Sept. 24, 1868	.....
44	Sr. St.-Marguerite-de-C....	M.-Emélie Bibeau....	St.-Frs.-du-Lac ..	April 27, 1848	Sept. 1, 1866	" " "	.....
45	Sr. St.-Marie-Madeleine...	Elmire Normandin ...	St.-Albans, Vt. .	Nov. 15, 1851	Sept. 9, 1866	" " "	.....
46	Sr. St.-Camille-de-Lellis...	M.-Célanire Longtin ..	St.-Constant.....	Oct. 19, 1847	Nov. 3, 1866	" " "	.....
47	Sr. St.-Josaphat.....	Marguerite Longtin...	St.-Constant.....	Oct. 29, 1845	Feb. 1, 1867	April 7, 1869	.....
48	Sr. St.-Léonard-de-P.-M..	M.-Louise Lussier	Boucherville.....	Oct. 2, 1843	May 18, 1867	" " "	.....
49	Sr. St.-Germaine C.....	Virginie Narbonne....	Longueuil.....	Feb. 26, 1849	Mar. 19, 1867	May 22, 1869	June 19, 1869
50	Sr. St.-Paul.....	M.-Elmire Lessard....	St.-Jude.....	July 31, 1850	Nov. 16, 1867	May 3, 1870	.....
51	Sr. St.-Célestin.....	M.-Adélia Beffre	St.-Constant.....	April 26, 1852	Nov. 20, 1867	" " "	.....
52	Sr. St.-Bernard....., ...	Joséphine Giroux.....	St.-Valentin.....	Dec. 26, 1840	Jan. 30, 1868	" " "	.....

NAMES OF THE PROFESSED-SISTERS OF MISÉRICORDE SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTION.—*Cont.*

No.	RELIGIOUS-NAMES.	FAMILY-NAMES.	BIRTH-PLACE.	BIRTH.	ENTRY.	PROFESSION.	DECEASE.
53	Sr. St.-Gertrude.....	M.-Ursule Goyette....	Longueuil.....	Jan. 14, 1848	June 16, 1868	Jan. 15, 1871	.....
54	Sr. St.-Michel-Archange...	Mary Cadden.....	Drumgoon, Irel'd.	Aug. 28, 1844	Aug. 30, 1869	Jan. 14, 1872	Dec. 24, 1888
55	Sr. St.-Emélie	M.-Sophie Rioux.....	Trois-Pistoles....	Nov. 25, 1833	Nov. 21, 1870	May 28, 1872	Oct. 19, 1895
56	Sr. St.-Agathe.....	Véronique Deschênes..	St.-Elisabeth	Jan. 6, 1846	Feb. 19, 1870	Sept. 24, 1872	June 19, 1893
57	Sr. St.-Germaine-Cousin...	M.-Louise Campeau...	Vaudreuil	June 29, 1852	Aug. 31, 1870	Jan. 16, 1873	.....
58	Sr. St.-Thaïs.....	Emélie Lemieux.....	St.-Rémi.....	Jan. 24, 1850	Sept. 11, 1871	Jan. 20, 1874	.....
59	Sr. St.-Cécile.....	Emélie Lessard.....	St.-Jude.....	Oct. 18, 1852	Sept. 14, 1871	" " "	.....
60	Sr. St.-Claire-d'Assise.....	Marie Dupuis.....	St.-Anicet.....	Aug. 26, 1851	Sept. 8, 1872	Jan. 20, 1875	Feb. 10, 1880
61	Sr. St.-Etienne	M.-Ida Beffre.....	St.-Jean-Chrys...	Mar. 19, 1858	July 12, 1872	Aug. 30, 1875	July 7, 1879
62	Sr. Marie-Louise.....	Marcelline Lavallée...	St.-Joseph-du-Lac	Aug. 9, 1857	Jan. 20, 1873	" " "	.....

63	Sr. St.-Julienne-Falc.....	M.-Elizabeth Campeau	Vaudreuil	Jan. 3, 1856	Feb. 7, 1873	Aug. 30, 1875	.....
64	Sr. St.-Véronique-du-C.....	Cordélia Lanthier.....	St.-Augustin.....	Feb. 21, 1852	Mar. 18, 1873	" " "	.....
65	Sr. St.-Fabien	M.-Florentine Perrault	St.-Jac.-de-l'Ach.	Oct. 21, 1858	Feb. 25, 1874	June 23, 1876	.....
66	Sr. St.-Jean-de-la-Croix....	M.-L.-Cordélia Forest.	Montreal.....	May 10, 1861	Nov. 19, 1874	June 7, 1878	Aug. 31, 1878
67	Sr. St.-Hélène	M.-L.-Eug. Deschamps	St.-Anne-de-Belle	Sept. 26, 1860	July 12, 1875	" " "	June 25, 1882
68	Sr. St.-Dominique.....	M.-Claire Rioux.....	Trois-Pistoles....	Aug. 7, 1860	Aug. 30, 1875	" " "	.....
69	Sr. St.-Rosalie.....	M.-Dallée Daoûst.....	Pointe-Claire	Dec. 6, 1854	Nov. 4, 1875	" " "	Dec. 19, 1881
70	Sr. St.-Edouard.....	Rosalie St-Jean	St.-Lin..... ...	May 11, 1850	Mar. 13, 1877	Sept. 24, 1879	.....
71	Sr. St.-Jacques	L.-Isabella Fletcher...	London, Ont.....	Aug. 1, 1860	July 3, 1877	" " "	.....
72	Sr. St.-Jeanne-de-Chantal .	M.-Augustine Pilon...	Vaudreuil.....	July 8, 1862	July 31, 1877	" " "	.....
73	Sr. St.-Jean-de-la-Croix....	Eudoxie Provost.....	St.-Julie	Jan. 25, 1861	Sept. 8, 1878	July 2, 1881	.....
74	Sr. St.-Rose-de-Lima.....	M.-Célanire Lussier...	St.-Bruno.....	Jan. 21, 1860	Nov. 3, 1878	" " "	.....
75	Sr. St.-Jean-l'Evangéliste..	M.-Victoria Longpré..	Montreal.....	Aug. 11, 1855	June 12, 1879	May 25, 1882	Aug. 23, 1883
76	Sr. St.-Béatrice.....	M.-Agnes-Julia Smith.	Alstead, N.H....	Sept. 2, 1858	Jan. 21, 1880	" " "	.....
77	Sr. St.-Aristide.....	S.-Jane Fitzsimmons...	Greenpoint, N.Y.	Sept. 19, 1858	" " "	" " "	.....
78	Sr. St.-François-d'Assise...	M.-Palmire Normandin	St.-Césaire.....	April 18, 1858	Oct. 27, 1880	Nov. 13, 1883	.....

NAMES OF THE PROFESSED-SISTERS OF MISÉRICORDE SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTION.—*Cont.*

No.	RELIGIOUS-NAMES.	FAMILY-NAMES.	BIRTH-PLACE.	BIRTH.	ENTRY.	PROFESSION.	DECEASE.
79	Sr. St.-Laurent	Ann Derrig	Kemptville, Ont.	April 26, 1863	Feb. 20, 1881	Nov. 13, 1883	
80	Sr. St.-Aurélie	M.-Rosalie Baron	St.-Hyacinthe	Dec. 17, 1862	Sept. 25, 1881	May 24, 1884	
81	Sr. St.-Arsène	M.-Agnès Bourgeois	L'Acadie	Feb. 25, 1852	Mar. 12, 1882	" " "	
82	Sr. St.-Lucie	M.-Mathilde Lanctôt	Watertown, N.Y.	June 14, 1859	Mar. 25, 1882	" " "	
83	Sr. St.-Hélène	Anna Lanctôt	Watertown, N.Y.	Sept. 25, 1861	" " "	" " "	
84	Sr. St.-Claire-d'Assise	M.-Agnes Monay	Dublin, Ont	June 11, 1856	April 21, 1882	" " "	
85	Sr. St.-Rosalie	M.-Adèle Hamelin	Nicolet	June 23, 1863	Sept. 8, 1881	Feb. 9, 1885	
86	Sr. St.-Jean-l'Évangéliste	M.-Louise Chartier	St.-Adèle	Nov. 19, 1864	July 19, 1883	Sept. 12, 1885	Sept. 17, 1885
87	Sr. St.-Eugénie	M.-Alix Chartier	St.-Adèle	Nov. 13, 1863	" " "	Nov. 13, 1885	
88	Sr. St.-Vincent-de-Paul	Julie-Hermine Vigneux	St.-Hyacinthe	Dec. 25, 1858	Sept. 8, 1883	" " "	

89	Sr. St.-Zénon.....	M.-Albina Langevin..	St.-Pie-de-Bagot..	June 27, 1863	Sept. 8, 1884	Nov. 13, 1886	.....
90	Sr. St.-Ignace.....	Catherine Cotter.....	Brasher F'ls, N. Y.	June 30, 1864	Oct. 25, 1884	" " "	.....
91	Sr. St.-Thomas-d'Aquin...	M.-Caroline Doherty..	Farnham.....	Jan. 22, 1865	Nov. 5, 1884	" " "	.....
92	Sr. St.-Victor.....	M.-Antonia Dumont..	Trois-Pistoles....	Mar. 2, 1866	Dec. 8, 1884	" " "	.....
93	Sr. Marie-du-Carmel.....	M.-Dina Touchet.....	St.-Scholastique..	Oct. 31, 1864	Feb. 1, 1885	" " "	.....
94	Sr. St.-Patrice.....	Margaret-Anna Greene	Ottawa.....	May 25, 1863	Feb. 24, 1885	" " "	.....
95	Sr. St.-Roch.....	Joséphine Thérien....	St.-Jérôme.....	Jan. 11, 1865	July 26, 1885	Sept. 8, 1888	.....
96	Sr. Marie-du-Rosaire.....	M.-Ernestine Renaud..	Contrecœur.....	July 7, 1865	Feb. 18, 1886	" " "	.....
97	Sr. St.-Bernardin-de-S....	M.-Herminie Gagnon..	Trois-Pistoles....	April 11, 1871	Nov. 14, 1885	" " "	.....
98	Sr. St.-Amable.....	M.-Aldina Huet.....	St.-Bruno.....	May 4, 1857	June 1, 1886	" " "	.....
99	Sr. St.-Joachim.....	M.-Amanda Benoit...	St.-Césaire.....	July 27, 1867	Sept. 26, 1886	May 24, 1889	Jan. 18, 1898
100	Sr. St.-Jean-Berchmans...	Mary-Jane Bastien....	Montreal.....	Nov. 20, 1870	Nov. 26, 1887	Jan. 16, 1890	.....
101	Sr. M.-de-l'Im.-Conception	Albertine Pouliotte...	Thurso.....	May 21, 1868	Dec. 8, 1887	" " "	.....
102	Sr Saint-Bonaventure.....	Margaret Burton.....	Tipperary, Ireland	Oct. 17, 1860	Dec. 14, 1887	" " "	.....
103	Sr. St.-Léon.....	M.-Elisabeth Joly....	St.-Elisabeth....	Mar. 9, 1863	April 20, 1888	Sept. 8, 1890	.....
104	Sr. St.-Bruno.....	M.-L.-Amanda Hudon	Stukely.....	Feb. 22, 1870	July 22, 1888	" " "	.....

NAMES OF THE PROFESSED-SISTERS OF MISÉRICORDE SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTION.—*Cont.*

No.	RELIGIOUS-NAMES.	FAMILY-NAMES.	BIRTH-PLACE.	BIRTH.	ENTRY.	PROFESSION.	DECEASE.
105	Sr. Marie-de-Bonsecours ...	M.-Louise Legrand ...	St.-Jac.-le-Mineur	Jan. 9, 1867	Aug. 17, 1888	Sept. 8, 1890	.....
106	Sr. St.-Grégoire	M.-Sara Legrand	St.-Jac.-le-Mineur	Feb. 13, 1869	" " "	" " "	.....
107	Sr. St.-François-de-Sales ..	M.-Catherine Haddeck	L'Acadie	May 1, 1871	April 26, 1889	Sept. 8, 1891	.....
108	Sr. St.-Justine	M.-Victorine Bourque.	St.-Pie-de-Guire. .	July 5, 1868	Aug. 28, 1889	" " "	.....
109	Sr. St.-Eulalie	M.-Albina Milette	Montreal	April 8, 1872	" " "	" " "	.....
110	Sr. St.-Sébastien	M.-AugustinePerreault	Chertsey	Aug. 20, 1867	Feb. 4, 1890	April 26, 1892	.....
111	Sr. St.-Philippe-de-Néri. ..	M.-Carmeliste Daunais	Contrecœur	Dec. 31, 1869	Mar. 1, 1890	" " "	.....
112	Sr. St.-François-de-Borgia.	M.-A.-Eva Dorais	Montreal	Mar. 25, 1869	June 1, 1890	Sept. 8, 1892	.....
113	Sr. St.-Etienne	M.-Olive Marcouiller. .	St.-Paulin	Aug. 4, 1864	Aug. 16, 1890	" " "	.....
114	Sr. St.-Charles-Borromée ..	M.-E.-Valida Milotte..	Verchères	Aug. 15, 1868	Aug. 29, 1890	Jan. 24, 1893	.....

115	Sr. St.-Pierre.....	M.-Emma Normandin.	Whitehall, N.Y..	April 16, 1872	Nov. 13, 1890	Jan. 24, 1893	.....
116	Sr. St.-Joseph.....	M.-Anne Dorais.....	Châteauguay.....	Aug. 19, 1866	April 13, 1890	Sept. 8, 1893	.....
117	Sr. St.-Ferdinand-de-Cast.	M.-Léontine Rioux ...	St.-Fabien.....	Aug. 20, 1866	May 12, 1891	" " "	....
118	Sr. St.-Michel-Archange...	M.-J.-Elodie Marion..	St.-Jac.-de-l'Ach.	Jan. 18, 1868	Aug. 21, 1891	" " "	.....
119	Sr. St.-Herménégilde.....	M.-Clarisse Milette...	Montreal.....	Jan. 8, 1871	Dec. 28, 1891	Sept. 8, 1894	.....
120	Sr. M.-des-Sept-Douleurs..	Marie-Dina Piette....	St.-Elisabeth	July 27, 1871	Aug. 15, 1892	" " "	.....
121	Sr. St.-Timothée.....	M.-Alexina Poulin....	St.-Valentin.....	Oct. 1, 1872	Sept. 25, 1892	" " "	Aug. 21, 1897
122	Sr. St.-Raphaël-Archange..	M.-Joséphine Leclerc..	St.-François (Riv. du Sud.)	Feb. 5, 1867	Sept. 15, 1893	Nov. 13, 1895	.....
123	Sr. St.-Alphonse-de-Lig...	M.-Bernardette Bastien	Montreal.....	Aug. 19, 1875	" " "	" " "	.....
124	Sr. St.-Jean-l'Evangéliste..	Rose-de-Lima Legrand	St.-Jac.-le-Mineur	Aug. 29, 1863	Nov. 13, 1893	" " "	.....
125	Sr. St.-Félix-de-Valois....	M.-Anne Levesque....	St.-Félix-de-V...	Aug. 13, 1878	April 10, 1894	Sept. 8, 1896	.....
126	Sr. Marie-du-Rédempteur..	M.-Emma Lafranchise.	Montreal.....	Dec. 14, 1869	June 1, 1894	" " "	.....
127	Sr. Marie-du-Calvaire.....	Marie-Joséphine Piette	St.-Elisabeth	Nov. 15, 1872	Aug. 15, 1894	" " "	.....
128	Sr. St-Geneviève.....	M.-Flore Roy.....	Laprairie.....	Oct. 4, 1873	Oct. 13, 1894	Jan. 16, 1897	.....
129	Sr. St.-Fébronie.....	M.-Berthe Leblanc ...	St.-Roch-de-Rich.	Oct. 4, 1876	" " "	" " "	.....
130	Sr. St.-Christine.....	M.-Ellen Stein.....	Geneva, N.Y.....	April 19, 1869	Nov. 13, 1894	" " "	.....

NAMES OF THE PROFESSED-SISTERS OF MISÉRICORDE SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE INSTITUTION.—*Cont.*

No.	RELIGIOUS-NAMES.	FAMILY-NAMES.	BIRTH-PLACE.	BIRTH.	ENTRY.	PROFESSION.	DECEASE.
131	Sr. St.-Catherine.	Anna-Cecelia Raab	Blauveltville N.Y.	Oct. 23, 1862	Nov. 13, 1894	Jan. 16, 1897	
132	Sr. St.-Irène.	M.-Alba Beaudry	Montreal	Nov. 17, 1873	" " "	" " "	
133	Sr. St.-Hildegarde	M.-Amanda Laporte	Montreal	Feb. 20, 1876	Dec. 18, 1894	" " "	
134	Sr. St.-Antoine-de-Padoue	M.-Louise Bourassa	Montreal	Oct. 13, 1871	Sept. 8, 1895	Mar. 19, 1898	
135	Sr. St.-Daniel	Catherine Murphy	Rossville S. I. N.Y.	Sept. 12, 1861	Nov. 13, 1895	" " "	
136	Sr. St.-Ambroise	M.-Adéline Rioux	Trois-Pistoles	Sept. 17, 1873	Dec. 8, 1895	" " "	
137	Sr. St.-Hippolyte	Rose-Anna Rousseau	St -Luce	Sept. 5, 1875	Mar. 5, 1896	" " "	
138	Sr. St.-M.-Mad.-de-Pazzi	S.-Elodie Dagenais	St.-Martin	April 27, 1870	April 13, 1896	" " "	
139	Sr. St.-Benoit	Maria Gervais	Joliette	Feb. 7, 1876	" " "	" " "	
140	Sr. Marie-du-Bon-Pasteur	M.-Eva Rioux	Trois-Pistoles	Aug. 13, 1868	April 16, 1896	" " "	

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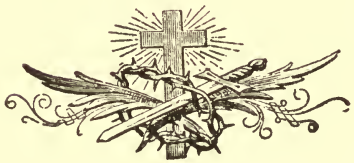

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